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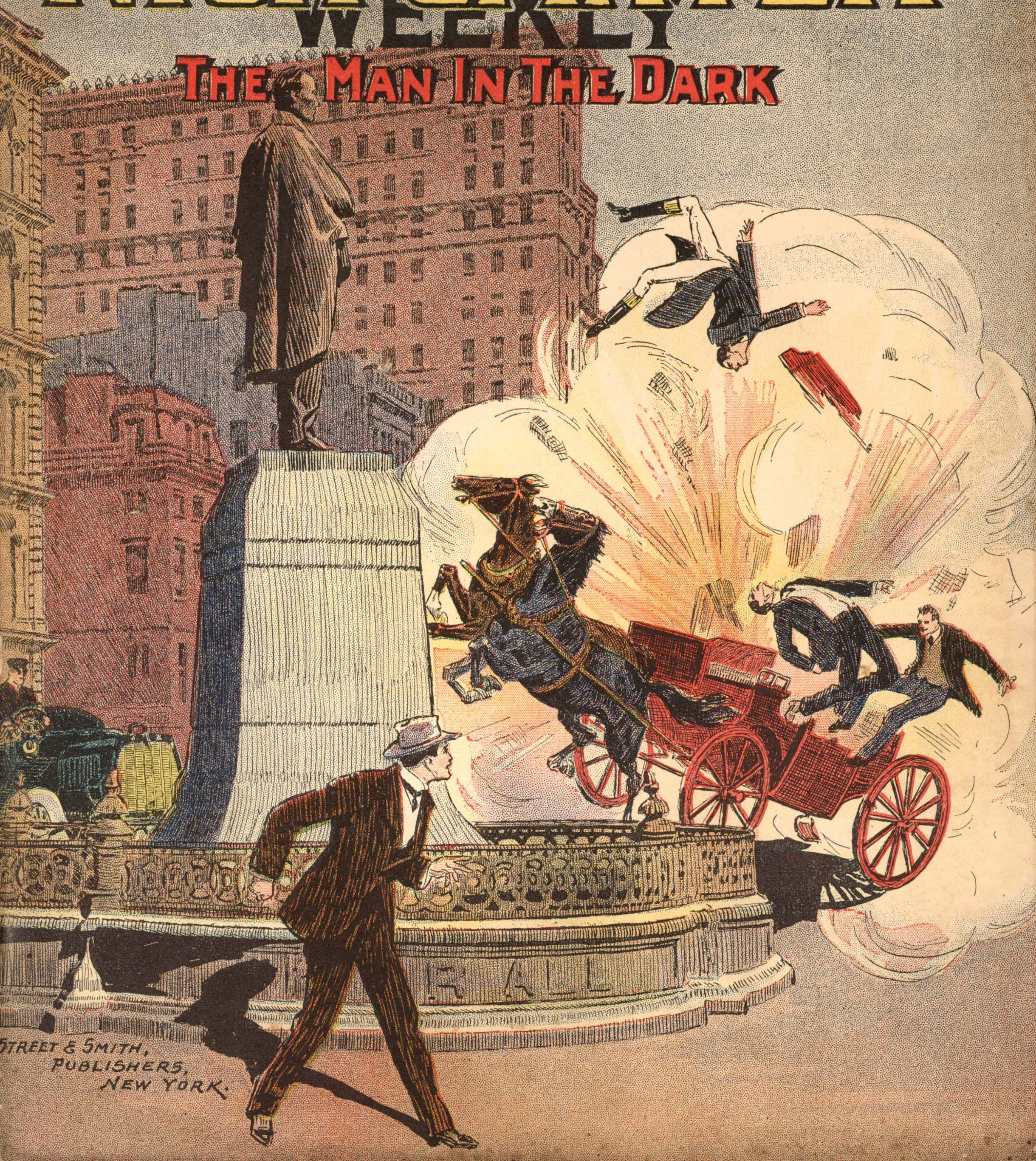
NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

THE MAN IN THE DARK



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NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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THE MAN IN THE DARK;

OR,

NICK CARTER'S MASTERLY TACT.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN IN THE DARK.

Patsy, Nick Carter's second assistant, halted at the corner and gazed searchingly, though tentatively, up and down both thoroughfares. For the moment he was undecided as to just what it was best for him to do under the circumstances.

It was a question in his mind whether he ought to seek the nearest telephone, call up his chief and inform him about what had happened during the last hour; or if it was not still more his duty to keep track of the woman he had been following for the last half-hour.

The woman was Zenobia Zara; he was positive of that. And yet he also knew that Zenobia Zara ought, by every rule of reasoning he knew, to be at that moment in prison in the District of Columbia, awaiting trial for murder.

Nevertheless, he was positive about his recognition of her. It was Zenobia whom he had seen and followed, and now she had passed inside a house that was a little way down the street at the corner of which he had halted; she had gone in through a hall door that was located adjoining a saloon with an unpronouncable name over the door; a saloon with dingy windows, and curtains half-drawn, as if its proprietor did not care to attract too much attention to his place of business; as if he were satisfied that the customers he entertained could find the place without additional light.

There was no doubt in the mind of Patsy concerning the character of the place.

The unpronouncable name had three z's in it. Z's and ch's and sch's seem to run hand in hand with anarchistic tendencies.

While the young assistant stood there undecided what to do, he spied a "small boy" of the East Side gamin type approaching, and so with quick motions he drew a slip of paper and a blank envelope from his pocket.

The envelope he addressed to Nick Carter. On the slip of paper he wrote:

"Zenobia. No mistake." Then he added the address of the place he had seen her enter, and also the queer name with its three z's, and signed his own name.

By that time the boy had approached near enough so that Patsy could attract his attention without shouting; and when the youngster was beside him, Patsy said to him:

"I have got a dollar that you can have if you will do an errand for me. I will give you car fare besides. What do you say?"

"If it ain't too far and if I don't have to spend the hull dollar gittin' there, you're on, boss," was the worldly wise response.

"Very well. If you do the errand exactly as I tell you to, there is another dollar at the end of the route for you."

"Is that dead straight, boss?" asked the urchin.

"Yes."

"I'm on."

"Can you read writing?"

"Naw. Never learned it. But I can remember the number and street and find them, if you tell me what they are."

Patsy told him, and the lad nodded sagely.

"That's dead easy," he commented. "Where's your letter?"

"Here it is; and here also is your dollar. Likewise here are four nickels for car fares. When you deliver the letter, tell the gentleman that I said he was to give you another dollar."

"Will he do it, boss?"

"Yes; that is an arrangement between us. We do it to make sure that a messenger like you will carry out his contract. Now, skip!"

"Any answer, boss?"

"No."

With a nod and a flash of his bright eyes, the boy turned and started away on the run, and was soon lost to view around the next corner.

After he had gone Patsy still remained where he was, thinking; and after a little he took a second slip of paper and another envelope from his pocket and wrote a somewhat more comprehensive message. Then, having addressed the letter and stamped it, he crossed the street to a mail-box which he had just noticed for the first time, and dropped this second message to his chief inside it.

"There," he said aloud to himself, "if the lad fails me, the chief will receive the second message in the morning post, anyhow."

All this time he had not permitted his glance to travel very far from the doorway through which he had seen Zenobia Zara pass, for it was no part of his plan that she should come forth again without his knowledge.

But he had seen nobody come out through the doorway, although several had entered there since the woman had gone in; and those who had entered after her were neither prepossessing in appearance nor reassuring in manner.

They were of the bewhiskered variety and of the unwashed type; furtive of eye and crafty in motion; aliens all. Patsy knew the breed only too well.

"I have counted five men who have entered that place since Zenobia went in," Patsy muttered to himself, "and there is no telling how many others entered before she came. It is a meeting of a group of anarchists without any doubt, and—well, I've got to figure it out somehow to be present."

Patsy realized what a dangerous thing it was to undertake, to attempt to attend in secret a meeting of that character. It were hardly less dangerous to walk naked into a den of rattlesnakes.

If he were discovered—and the chances were about a thousand to one that he would be—there could be only one outcome for him. He knew that perfectly well.

"I suppose," he muttered again to himself, "that my real duty is to remain here just where I am and watch till Zenobia comes out again, and then to trail her. That is what I really ought to do; that is what the chief would tell me I should do under the circumstances. But I also know that if the chief himself were here now in my place, he would follow that bunch inside the house and find out what they are up to. Anyhow, I'm going to that meeting. I'll wait a little while longer until I am satisfied that they are all there—that no others are coming to catch me in the rear, and then——"

So he continued to wait at the corner until another half-hour had passed, during which not another individual entered at the door.

Satisfied then that all who were expected to attend that meeting were already there, he glided along the street to the hall door that had attracted him, pushed it open, and stepped inside the pitch-black hallway of the house.

The door which had not been latched—indeed there was no latch upon it—swung shut behind him of its own weight before even so much as a glimpse of the interior was vouchsafed him by the lights from the street, and he was literally in utter darkness.

Patsy reached out first with one hand and then with the other until he had touched the walls on either side of him; then, realizing that the stairs would be erected against the party-wall of the building, he followed slowly along it, touching it with his left hand while he kept his right arm extended in front of him to prevent collision with any possible obstacle that might be in his way.

He moved along perhaps twenty feet in this manner when that extended right hand came suddenly in contact with a yielding substance; a substance which he instantly recognized as cloth—otherwise a coat, and with a man inside of it.

Patsy had not suspected that a man was there and he was not prepared for the encounter; but before he could make a move of any kind, his hand was seized in a firm grasp and he was instantly the recipient of three distinct and mysterious "grips," the signs evidently of the secret society which was at that moment holding a meeting somewhere within that house.

Of course Patsy was expected to reply to these signals with others, but naturally he did not in the least know how to do so.

The hand of the man relaxed for an instant, and when Patsy did not give the return signals, the others were repeated again; and while the man was doing that, it came to the young detective like a flash that if he made no reply this time, the man in the dark would instantly give the alarm. He would shout or do something to warn his friends at the meeting that a stranger was in their midst and everything would be "off" even before anything was "on."

It wouldn't do to permit this fellow to summon assistance; Patsy knew that.

He knew, also, by the feeling of the hand that had grasped his own, that the man in the dark was a muscular fellow; but, nevertheless, Patsy did not hesitate about what to do.

While the man was repeating the signals Patsy resorted to a trick of ju-jutsu which he had learned long ago from a former assistant of Nick Carter's—from Ten-Ichi, whom some of us remember.

It was rather a savage trick and sometimes cost the victim of it his life. Experts never make use of it only in the greatest extremity, but Patsy used it then for he knew that not only would it overcome the man in the dark and render him instantly unconscious, no matter how great his own strength might be, but he would also be prevented from uttering a sound to attract the attention of others to him.

There would be a heavy fall, to be sure, but Patsy had to take chances as to that.

And so, while the anarchist was repeating the mysterious grips that called for answers, Patsy acted.

He shot his left hand forward—you will remember that it had been following along the wall of the house—and brought the palm of it sharply against the man's forehead, thus throwing his head backward; at the same instant, so that the two blows were almost simultaneous, he snatched his right hand free from the detaining grasp and struck a terrific blow with its outer edge, against the "Adam's apple" of his opponent's throat. This was followed with the swiftness of a flash of light by jerking the head forward again, for Patsy's left hand still retained its hold upon the hair of the man's head, and the same sort of a blow, delivered with the outer edge of the right hand, fell upon the nape of the anarchist's neck.

He fell to the floor at Patsy's feet like a bag of meal, limp, unconscious, perhaps lifeless—Patsy did not much care just then—although without doubt the man was far too tough to be put permanently out of commission thus easily.

For just one instant then Patsy took the big chance of flashing his searchlight, his electric torch.

It revealed the location of the stairs; and also the passageway through the hall to a rear door, and returning the torch to his pocket, Patsy began at once to drag his captive along the hall toward that rear door, thinking that he could dispose of him somehow in that manner.

CHAPTER II.

A SECRET MEETING OF ANARCHISTS.

When Patsy reached the door that the light had discovered to him, he found that it was securely fastened by many bolts and a lock, to say nothing of a heavy bar of wood that was in place across it.

"Well," he thought, "for people who leave the front door without any latch at all, they sure are mighty particular about the rear entrance."

He searched through his captive's pockets and found in one of them a handkerchief. This he twisted until it was hard and then forced it between the fellow's jaws. Next, with a sigh, he sacrificed the two pairs of handcuffs he had with him, disposing of one pair on the ankles of the anarchist and locking the second pair upon his wrists after pulling the arms around behind the body.

With extreme caution and without making a sound, he then removed the bar from its place across the door, shot back the bolts, turned the key, and opened the heavy door; then, having shoved the man outside, he replaced the fastenings with the same extreme care.

Then he thought for a moment, considering if it were wise to flash his light just once more—and deciding that it was not.

He fancied that he caught the murmur of voices while he listened, but he could not detect the sound a second time; and after a little he began to move forward slowly, it being his intention to seek the stairs again and to make his way up them, for it had not occurred to him that the meeting he was seeking would be anywhere other than in one of the rooms of the upper floors.

But, as he reached out in the darkness for the wall by which to guide himself along, he discovered that he was now behind the stairway and that there was a door there under the stairs; a door doubtless which communicated with stairs leading to the cellar under the house, for the house itself was on the level of the street so that there was no basement.

It was an impulse rather than a logical act which led him then to search for the latch of this door, and having found it, to raise it silently and slowly, pressing with one knee against the door as he did so, and at last, when the latch was raised, opening it with the extreme of caution.

Instantly—as soon as the door was ajar not more than the space of half an inch—the murmur of voices came to his ears again, and he knew that they proceeded from the cellar. The anarchists' place of meeting was then down-stairs, not on one of the upper floors.

Ah, if he had only dared to flash his light then; but such a proceeding was entirely out of the question.

He hoped that the door would not offer to squeak, and it did not; he prayed silently that there might not be an electric alarm attached to it, to give warning of his approach to the people down there, and evidently there was not.

He pulled the door slowly open until the aperture was sufficient for him to pass, and then he glided through and pulled it shut and latched it behind him.

He was on the stairs now, and he edged over close to the wall, knowing that there was less likelihood that they would creak if he kept his weight upon the ends of the boards; and so, one by one, he descended them, feeling his way in the darkness, almost holding his breath, and worrying lest the beating of his heart might betray his presence there.

There were twelve of them. He counted them as he descended; and then there was a soft, dirt floor beneath his feet. He was in the cellar.

Still there was the murmur of voices, but no word that was distinct, and he knew that the persons who were talking were beyond some sort of partition in the cellar.

Realizing that it would not do to attempt to walk across that cellar floor in the darkness lest he should collide with some obstacle and thus betray his presence, he got down to his hands and knees and crept, pausing with each advance to reach his hands out in front of him to pilot the way.

After a space which seemed interminable but which really occupied only a very few minutes, he touched the partition he sought; and then, while he hesitated, trying to decide whether to turn to the right or the left in his search for the door, he was startled by a sudden accession in the sound of the voices; words that were uttered were suddenly distinctly heard, and he knew that the door he sought had been opened for him, and that it was less than two feet distant ahead of him.

"Close that door," Patsy heard a gruff voice exclaim, in the Russian language; and instantly, in the same tongue the voice of a woman responded—it was a beautifully sweet and musical voice, too:

"Let the door remain as it is if you desire my presence here. There are twenty of us inside this stuffy room, almost two whole groups, and I can't breathe. Let the door remain as it is and we will speak in even lower tones."

There was some grumbling at this request, which was delivered in the form of an order, and in a tone that expected obedience, too; and some of the grumbling was in Russian while much of it was in German.

The remarkable thing about it all was the fact that although Patsy knew the door to be open, there was not a ray of light to be seen anywhere.

The anarchists were holding their meeting in the dark.

Patsy had been told that they sometimes did that sort of thing, particularly when the purpose of the meeting was especially grave. There are certain occasions when the proceedings are so secret that identities must be concealed even from the assembled members, and this was evidently one of them.

Patsy was soon to learn why this particular meeting was held in the dark.

"Shall we proceed with the business in hand?" the voice of the woman demanded; and Patsy knew that it belonged to Zenobia Zara.

"I would rather have that door closed," said the same gruff voice that had objected to its being opened at all.

"Nonsense," she replied. "Who is there to overhear us? And is not Orloff on guard above? When did any of you ever hear of Orloff's neglecting his duty?"

There was no reply to this, and after a moment of silence she continued:

"As I have just been explaining to you, it is only by the greatest good fortune that I am enabled to be with you again. If it had not been for the accident to the train that was conveying me to Washington, I would now be a prisoner awaiting trial. But Vassili and Tomschk are still prisoners. They will be indicted, tried, and condemned to death unless we save them. Are ye men who believe in individual liberty and yet are willing that our friends should suffer death at the hands of the law? Speak!"

"No! No! No, no, no!" came hoarse responses from every part of the room.

"I shall want three men to carry out the decree of our order, after it is passed," she continued, "and to render them aid and assistance, I shall ask you to give me three substitutes."

"No," objected the man with the gruff voice. "Let there be three, as you say, and if they fail, then three more, and three more and so on until it is accomplished; but only three at a time."

"Why three?" asked another voice, speaking sharply. "It is distinctly against the rules. We have no right to select more than one and he must be chosen in secret, so that no man in this room may know who he is. I insist upon adhering to the rule."

"But it minimizes the chances to save our friends," objected Zenobia impatiently.

"No matter; it is a rule. I insist upon it. Let the man be chosen according to our custom. Only you, madam, whom we have selected as our leader and whom we look up to as a sort of queen—only you shall know his identity. I insist upon the rule."

"Oh, very well, then."

"Let the proceedings continue," the man went on. "Tell us, madam, what is to be done and how it is to be accomplished, in order that we may all understand it; and then, when the man who is to carry out the sentence, is selected, there will be no need of further instruction, unless you should care to give him other directions in person."

"I have in my possession," replied Zenobia, "complete plans of the interior of the prison where Vassili and Tomschk will be confined while they await trial. The spot where the bomb must be exploded is marked with a red cross surrounded by a circle. It is the only really weak spot in the entire building, but a bomb such as our expert can make for us will easily tear a hole in that part of it through which one might drive a horse. Do you heed me?"

"We do. Aye. Yes, yes," came the responses.

"That bomb, for use against the wall, must be triple the usual size. Do you understand that, Expert?"

"I do," replied a timid voice that Patsy had not heard before.

"There must be also two smaller bombs; two of the smallest size we use; those that you make, Expert, that are covered with leather and look like the baseballs that are used in this country."

"Yes, madam."

"When can you have all three of them ready?"

"The two smaller ones are ready now, madam. The larger one will have to be made. I can have it prepared by this time to-morrow night."

"Very well. To-morrow night, at midnight, you will bring the three bombs to me."

"Yes, madam."

"Now, my friends," she continued, "I will state openly the plans I have made. If there is objection, or a suggestion from any of you, speak out. Otherwise we will consider that all has been duly voted upon and passed. Is that agreed?"

There was a general murmur of assent.

"When our instrument for the execution of this deed is selected, I alone will know his identity. I will deliver the three bombs to him, and also the plan of the prison that I have mentioned. Also I will arrange with him privately, about the date when the work is to be done, for that cannot be decided to-night. Is that agreed to?"

There was no dissent.

"I will see to it that our friends in the prison are notified as to what is to be done, and that they are informed of the time and hour of its occurrence. After that I will arrange a set of signals with our instrument. If you are content to leave all these preliminaries to me, it will go like clockwork and there will be no mistake."

"We are content," said the man with the gruff voice.

"For the sake of your general information, I will state that upon the given signals, the instrument will first explode the big bomb at the point indicated on the plans. He will then await the second signal, and upon receiving it, he will cast one of the smaller bombs which he will have in the side pockets of his coat—he will cast one of those over the heads of the escaping prisoners and into the midst of the pursuers; for there will be many on hand to take up the pursuit. This will be the most dangerous part of the work of our instrument. Is there any objection?"

The utter silence that followed evidenced the fact that there was none.

"That done," continued Zenobia, "the instrument will make his own escape, and the third bomb is to aid him in accomplishing it. He will know best how to make use of it if necessity requires. I need give him no instructions on that point, save that he is to kill, kill, kill rather than be taken, even though he kills himself with his enemies. You understand?"

There was a murmur of assent.

"For the rest, I will not be far away. I will be at hand ready to lend aid. Whoever our instrument may be I ask him now to trust me implicitly. In that way only can we succeed, and in that way only can he hope to escape himself. And now, if you are ready we will proceed to the selection of the instrument."

CHAPTER III.

A HUMAN INSTRUMENT OF DEATH.

Patsy felt as though he had a front seat at some new form of entertainment, for the utter darkness by which he was surrounded was as impenetrable as the proverbial nights in Egypt.

In altering his position in order to establish himself more comfortably while they were talking, he had discovered that without knowing it, he had crawled behind a box that stood near the partition, and that the open side of the box was toward him.

It was a large box, too; such a one as is commonly used for packing drygoods.

Now, not knowing what the next procedure might be, he decided suddenly that he would get inside the box since by doing so he would be better concealed in case a light should be struck, or if any of the plotters should for any purpose visit the outer cellar.

So he changed his position cautiously, finally ensconcing himself snugly inside the box where he knew he could not be seen or discovered unless the box itself were searched; and such a thing was not likely to happen unless suspicion of his presence were in some manner aroused.

It turned out to be fortunate that he took this precaution, as we shall presently discover.

There was an interval of silence following upon the last announcement made by Zenobia, and then her voice was heard again.

"Stand up, all of you, and move your chairs back against the walls," she directed; and there followed a general shuffling of feet and scraping of chairs as her order was obeyed; and then utter silence again.

"Now, at the word, you will spend two minutes in changing your positions as it may please you. Each man will fold his arms and will not attempt by the sense of touch or in any other manner to discover the identity of the person who stands next to him. The three women who are present will withdraw to one of the corners of the room, for this will not be a woman's work. When all is ready I will pass slowly among you. I will touch each one as I pass him upon the left breast, and to one of you I will fasten a rosette that I now hold in my hand. As I pass among you, touching each one on the left breast, the one touched will alter his position, searching as he does so, to find if I have attached the rosette to him. The person who discovers that rosette over his heart will make his way slowly to the outer cellar where he will await me. Those who remain behind will keep moving, and no person shall utter so much as a whisper until I have again taken my place here where I stand now, and have given directions for the lights to be turned on. Are you ready?"

There were grunts of assent from all parts of the room.

After that Patsy could hear them as they shuffled about the room, and he could well understand how impossible it would be under the circumstances, for any one there to detect who might become the selected instrument.

It was a strange scene, if one might be permitted to call it a scene, where nothing whatever was visible.

But Patsy could picture it all in his mind.

He could in fancy see those men slowly marching this way and that, from one place in the room to another, bumping into one another, shuffling about with tightly folded arms, and in silence, waiting to discover, each one, if he was the selected instrument;

and he could imagine the sighs of relief that would go up from many after they were touched, when the rosette was not found afterward.

This remarkable condition lasted several moments, and then the voice of Zenobia, proceeding from a point so close to Patsy that it startled him, exclaimed:

"Keep moving until I return."

A moment later he heard her exclaim softly, "Ah!" and he knew that the "instrument" had joined her there in the darkness.

Then he heard the sound made by the closing of the door, and an instant later there was a flash of light in the outer cellar.

Zenobia was leaning against the box in which Patsy was concealed; the man who had been thus strangely summoned to her side was evidently facing her.

"So! It is you, is it?" he heard her say in a low tone.

"Yes, madam, it is I," was the reply. "It would seem almost as if you intended that it should be I, Zenobia."

"Do you object?" she asked coldly.

"No. Not at all."

"Come farther from the door, that those inside may not hear your voice."

"They will not hear. The door is thick."

Patsy had already discovered that it was the man with the gruff voice, who had taken so prominent a part in the proceedings.

They moved away from the box then, and presently stood in the middle of the cellar; and then Patsy again saw the flash of a light, only this time it came to him through a crack in the box against which he quickly placed one eye.

He could see only the outlines of Zenobia's figure, for she stood with her back toward him, and she was holding the light—an electric torch like his own—extended in one hand, and with the light shining full upon the man's face, which was toward him.

It was only for an instant, however.

She instantly released the button and impenetrable darkness surrounded them again. Patsy had barely seen the face before it disappeared again. It was as one might see a face in a flash of lightning on a dark night.

"Why did you do that?" the man asked impatiently.

"To discover if you are afraid" she replied coldly, and with the suggestion of a sneer in her voice.

"Did you find out?" he returned; and the sneer was not absent from his own tones.

"Yes. You are not afraid."

"Thank you—for nothing." They were conversing in English now. "Did you ever know me when I was afraid?"

"No; but also I have never known you under such circumstances. It is rather strange that you should have been the one selected for the instrument."

"Do you think so? I do not."

"No?" There was a world of contemptuous impudence in the rising inflection of that one word.

"No. You meant to select me when you left the platform on which you were seated."

"Indeed! But how should I be able to do so, under the circumstances?"

"You know well enough. You knew before you stepped down to make the selection."

"Bah! You are suspicious."

"No; I am only logical. The texture of my coat is different from the others. You had only to touch it with your fingers to recognize me. I knew while you were speaking that I was to be selected; that you would search through those moving animals till you found me."

"Then at least you are not disappointed," she sneered openly.

"No."

"You will carry out the decree?"

"Certainly. But there is something else that I will do, also, unless——"

"Ah! Unless—— Unless what?"

"You know, Zenobia."

"How can I know unless you tell me?"

"You know that I want you for my wife. I have told you so often enough."

"And haven't I told you quite as often that it could never be?"

"Yes; but now it is different."

"Different? How is it different, pray?"

"You know."

"You seem to be fond of that expression. It means nothing to me."

"Well, you know many things that are included in that expression at the present moment, Zenobia."

"Do I? It might be advisable for you to be more explicit."

"You know very well that I am not an anarchist because of any sympathy I have for that thing you call 'The Cause.'"

"It will be well that you do not permit your brother members to hear you make such a statement."

"Nonsense! So long as I am an anarchist and live up to the rules it does not matter what my reasons are for being one. You know that as well as I."

"Well?"

"And you know, also, that I joined them only because I might be near you."

"You have told me so often enough; but it does not follow that I entirely believe."

"On the contrary, you do believe."

"I think that a moment ago you were about to threaten me, weren't you? You said, 'But there is something else that I will do unless——' You got no farther than that. Was it to have been a threat?"

"Yes."

"Beware, sir, lest——"

He interrupted her with a low laugh that was not exactly pleasant to hear. Patsy could fancy that she shuddered when she did hear it. He felt that in her place he might have done so.

"That brings me back again to something else that I started to say a moment ago," he said.

"Yes. What was it?"

"This: You know that under the circumstances that now exist, having been selected as the instrument to carry out the decree, my life is sacred to every member of these two groups which have united forces. You know that, don't you?"

"Well, what of it?"

"What of it, you say? It is because of that fact that I dare to threaten you, Zenobia."

"Ah! Is it so? You have not told me the nature of the threat."

"Nevertheless I mean to tell you."

"Well?"

"Unless you promise me on your oath as a member of this order that you will become my wife after this decree is carried out——"

"You may not escape. You may be killed yourself."

"In that case you will be released from any promise you have made, won't you?"

"Yes. Go on."

"Unless you make me such a promise, I swear to you that the third bomb I carry with me to Washington shall be exploded at your feet even though the whole world goes to eternity with it. Do you understand that?"

Patsy could hear her catch her breath sharply, as if she were really startled by his vehemence and the evident sincerity of his intention.

"Yes," she faltered. "I understand it."

"Do you make me the promise?"

"Yes," she murmured. "I promise you that if you return from this expedition alive, having accomplished what you are sent to do, I will marry you. Is that enough?"

"Yes."

"Then meet me at the appointed place at ten o'clock in the morning of the day after to-morrow. I will be there with a closed carriage which you will enter when I speak to you."

CHAPTER IV.

PATSY MAKES HIS REPORT.

"I don't know his name, because I did not hear it mentioned; and as for his face, it was only for an instant that I saw it; say the tenth part of a second."

It was Patsy who made this remark, and it was addressed to his chief, Nick Carter, in reply to a question that had been asked. The two were seated together in the detective's study, and the time was the morning after Patsy's adventure as described in the foregoing chapters.

Patsy had been relating his experience to the detective, and had got as far as the point where we left him; the point where Zenobia had made the promise demanded of her by the "instrument."

"I suppose, as a matter of fact, that no names were mentioned at that meeting at all," said the detective.

"Zenobia's was the only one; and even that was not used, save by the 'instrument,' after they came into the outer cellar together."

"You don't think she liked being forced into making the promise, do you?"

"No. She hated it, and she hates him. He was right when he charged her with purposely selecting him as the instrument. She did not deny it."

"Do you think, Patsy, that you would be able to recognize the man if you should see him on the street?"

"No."

"Why not? You saw his face, if only for that fraction of an instant."

"Yes; but even in the little I saw I could detect the fact that the huge beard he wore did not grow on his face, nor do I think his long hair sprouted from his head."

"False beard and wig, eh?"

"Yes; and shaggy eyebrows to match."

"But if you could detect the falseness of the beard in that fleeting glance, surely his companions in the place must have been able to do so, also, after the lights were turned on. They were turned on later, weren't they?"

"Yes."

"Well——"

"I think, chief, that it is the fashion for the whole bunch to wear false beards and wigs and other disguises, when they attend those meetings. I think it is part of their general custom of secrecy."

"Possibly that is true."

"If there should be a raid don't you see that those who were fortunate enough to escape would not be in danger of recognition afterward?"

"Yes."

"That is the way I size it up, anyhow."

"Well, get on with your story. I find it interesting. When I received the note you sent by the boy I supposed you must be mistaken in believing that you recognized Zenobia; but I telephoned to Washington at once and discovered that you were doubtless correct, after all."

"I was, all right."

"Yes. Now, what happened after that conversation in the outer cellar was finished? Was that all of it, by the way?"

"Yes. Quite all."

"What next?"

"The two returned together to the room where the meeting was held."

"Did they leave the door open this time?"

"Yes. Zenobia returned to her place—on a platform at the opposite side of the room, as I afterward discovered—and directed that the lights be turned on. The lights consisted of two feeble gas-jets."

"Could you see into the room, then?"

"No; not without being seen. I didn't care to run the risk of discovery."

"Certainly not. Your information was too valuable, to say nothing of your life; eh?"

"Well, I'll admit that I gave rather more consideration to the latter," replied Patsy, with a grin.

"No one could blame you for that. What next?"

"Oh, there was a lot of talk. It didn't amount to much."

"What was it about?"

"They went over about the same ground they had covered while they were in darkness, Zenobia assured them all of the entire faithfulness of the chosen instrument."

"Was the place where she is to meet him at ten tomorrow morning again referred to?"

"The subject was not mentioned."

"Nor any suggestion of the place to which the 'expert' is to take the bombs, at midnight to-night?"

"No."

"You got no clue as to the location of either place?"

"Not one."

"Nor any idea regarding where Zenobia is concealing herself?"

"Not a smell of it."

"Did you remain till after the meeting closed?"

"Not much, I didn't. Anyhow, it wouldn't have done any good."

"Why not?"

"Because after a little Zenobia ordered that the door be closed, and when that was done I couldn't hear a word, nothing more than a mere murmur."

"Was that when you came away?"

"Yes. I thought the opportunity too good to lose."

"There is one thing which you should have done, Patsy."

"I know. You are going to say that I should have hung around there outside, on the chance of shadowing Zenobia to her home, or to the place where she is hiding."

"Yes."

"Well, that was my intention. But there was another thing that had to be done first."

"You refer, I suppose, to the guard, who was called Orloff."

"Yes. You see, if I had left him in the predicament he was in, he would have been discovered. The gag and the handcuffs would have told those anarchists exactly what had happened. They would have known, the moment they found him, that some one had been there, and that doubtless their plans had been overheard; and so——"

"Well, they will guess that anyhow, won't they?"

"I'm not so sure about that. You see, I got rid of Orloff entirely."

"Eh? How?"

"When Zenobia ordered the door closed and I discovered that I could hear no more of the proceedings, I hurried up the stairs again. Then I unbarred and opened that back door, pulled Orloff inside, reclosed the door, took the fellow on my back—and, gee whiz, he was heavy."

"I don't doubt it. Go on."

"I loaded him upon my back after bringing his hands around in front of him. You see, in that way I could hook them around me so he wouldn't fall off."

"Yes."

"Then I carted him out upon the street and through it for two long blocks."

"You ran quite a risk in doing that, Patsy."

"I know it. I knew it at the time, but it was a risk that had to be taken if I carried out what I wished to accomplish."

"Well, what did you do with him?"

"Fortunately, I didn't meet a soul. You see, it was after two in the morning then, and by good luck the street was deserted. I was in hopes that I would meet a copper, but I didn't, and so I carried the man two long blocks before I put him down."

"And then——"

"I hid him in an areaway. I couldn't carry him another step."

"But you did not leave him there! You told me a moment ago——"

"I know. Wait a moment. I left him there while I ran on to the next corner in search of a policeman. I found one, too. I asked him to call the patrol-wagon, which he did when I had made myself known; and I sent Orloff to police headquarters, instead of to the station-house."

"You did right about that."

"The copper wanted me to go along with them, but I got out of it. One of the fellows on the wagon happened to know me. It was Finnigan. He was driving."

"Well?"

"Then I shot back to the place of the meeting, thinking that I would get there in time to trail Zenobia. But I didn't."

"She had gone already?"

"Yes; but say, there was certainly something doing around that place all the same."

"What was it?"

"Those anarchists were looking for Orloff. He had been missed. At first I thought that Zenobia was somewhere around, but from a conversation that I presently heard I learned that she had gone."

"Do you mean that you mixed with them? With the anarchists?"

"Well, not to any great extent. There were two or three loafers hanging around the outskirts of the scene, so to speak, and I joined that bunch. I could hear only a word from the anarchists now and then, but I heard enough to know that they were mightily puzzled; but I thought it did not occur to them that he had been attacked and afterward carted away, and later I knew that I was right about it."

"How was that?"

"Two of them passed where I was standing, after the search was given up, and one of them said to the other:

"'Orloff was always a trifle queer, you know. I think he has just wandered off——' and that was all I heard; but it was sufficient to reassure me."

"Yes. Didn't you see any of those men plainly enough to recognize them again?"

"Hardly. It was quite dark there, and I dared not get too close to them. I didn't want them to suspect me, when things were working so well."

"No. But how about voices?"

"There are two that I will sure recognize if I happen to hear them again."

"Which two? The man who made the promise to Zenobia, I suppose, for one?"

"Yes. And the 'expert' for another."

"Good."

"In fact, I am inclined to think that I should recognize again any of the voices I heard while I was in that cellar."

"I think so, too. I wish it had occurred to you to trail that expert."

"It did; but he had gone, too, when I returned. At least, I listened for his voice. If he was still there he refrained from speaking, and of course I could recognize him in no other way."

"That's so. I had forgotten that."

"Now, chief, what is the next move?"

"I don't know yet, Patsy. I'll have to think it over a little. Come back here in an hour and we will take up the subject again."

CHAPTER V.

ZENOBIA'S THREAT.

The detective had been left alone in his study for perhaps half an hour when Joseph came in bearing a card on which appeared the name: "Michael Xavier O'Brien."

Instantly Nick Carter's face lighted with pleasure, and he gave directions that the caller be conducted to him there in the study at once.

"Michael, how are you?" exclaimed the detective, as he rose with extended hand to greet his guest. "It is a very great pleasure indeed to see you again—and to know that you are no longer serving an undeserved sentence behind prison bars." *

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*Read No. 604 of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "The Convict's Secret."

"That fact is due entirely to you and your kindness," replied the Irishman, dropping into the chair that the detective indicated. "It is good to be free again, Mr. Carter, and to have my citizenship restored to me; to know that my innocence has been thoroughly established."

"You have only just arrived in town, Michael?" asked Nick.

"I came directly from the train to you, sir."

"That is right; and while you remain in town, this house must be your home. How is the warden?"

"Fine, sir. He sent his regards to you."

"Thank you."

"Mr. Carter, I should in any case have been here to-day to see you, but it so happens that I have some disagreeable news to impart; news which would have brought me here even though I had not intended to appear quite so soon."

"Indeed?" Nick was smiling. "What would you say, Michael, if I could guess before you speak what that news is?"

"I don't know, sir; although of course it is possible that you may have heard about it from other sources. I have positive information that Zenobia has escaped and is at liberty."

The detective nodded.

"Yes," he said, "I have received the same information, though not in the way you would suppose."

"Indeed, sir?"

"One of my assistants encountered her on the street last night and trailed her to a meeting of anarchists, down in the East Side. And, by the way, that reminds me that *you* are an anarchist."

"No, sir. Please don't say that. It is true that I joined with that group in Philadelphia, but you know that I did it only to watch over my sister who had been forced into it by Zenobia. You know that I never had any sympathy with them or for them, do you not?"

"Certainly, Michael. But that does not alter the fact that you know many of their secrets and passwords."

"That is true."

"I shall want to discuss that subject with you again some time, Michael. Just now I wish you would tell me how you learned of Zenobia's escape."

"I have it directly from her."

"Eh? From her? You don't mean that you have seen her, do you?"

"No. She wrote to me."

"Ah! At the prison?"

"Yes. I went out there yesterday afternoon to bid the warden good-by before I left the city, and he gave me the letter."

"Wait a moment. Then it is supposable that she still supposes you to be an inmate there, isn't it?"

"I think there is no doubt of that, sir."

"She has not heard about the pardon, then?"

"I don't think so; and I don't know how she would be likely to hear of it. The Philadelphia papers had the news, of course, but it was a local affair. The New York papers would not consider the news worth a mention."

"No; probably not. Have you the letter with you?"

"Yes; would you like to see it?"

"No; read it to me."

"It is really such a silly lot of trash that—oh, well, I'll read it. It begins with 'My dear Michael;' and then she goes on to say:

" 'Realizing the fact that the warden of your prison and doubtless others as well, will read this letter before it is allowed to go to you, I cannot say all that I would like to. Nevertheless, I will say enough to apprise you of what my intention is although I must perforce leave out the details.

" 'The main fact that I wish to bring out prominently to your notice is the interesting one that notwithstanding the activities of Mr. Nick Carter, I am at liberty again. After the extradition papers were secured—and you know considerable time was consumed in that episode; rather more than a week—Vassili, Tomschk, and I were bundled upon a train to be taken to Washington. I was taken to the smoking-car with the other prisoners, but I managed to make my guards suppose that the air in the car made me ill, and accordingly one of them took me back into another car; the one next behind it.

" 'Somewhere along the line there had been an accident. A freight had run off the track, or something, and we ran into the wreckage with sufficient force to jar us considerably, although I believe no damage was done.

" 'My guard, who appeared to dislike the feeling of the handcuff on his wrist—we had been fastened together, you know—had removed it and fastened it to the seat, so I suppose he believed I was safe enough, as I could not very well drag the seat out of the car with me; when the stop occurred, he left me and went to the door to look out, to discover what was the matter. Talk about a woman's curiosity, it isn't a patch on a man's.

" 'I watched him, and presently I saw him leap from the step to the ground and disappear.

" 'It was my opportunity, and I seized it. I easily slipped my hand through the iron bracelet. Then I rose and hurried back through the train to the rear car. Of course everybody who had temporarily left the cars to view the wreck were gathered on that side of the train where it had occurred, and so I left by the opposite side. Fortunately there were trees and bushes growing there, of which I took advantage with the result that I was screened from view until I was far enough away not to be recognized.

" 'I was fortunate also in arriving at a trolley track very soon afterward, and as a car was approaching, I boarded it. I need not detail the rest of my experiences, more than to add that I experienced no difficulty in making good my escape. I have been wondering ever since what that guard had to say when he returned and found that I had gone.

" 'And now for the real purpose of this letter, my dear half-brother.

" 'I am not unmindful of the fact that to you I owe the predicament in which I have lately been placed. But for the aid you offered, Nick Carter would never have been able to trace us and to capture me; and, Michael, I am not one who forgets those little attentions.

" 'I am going to pay you off in rather a strange manner, you will think, when you hear what it is, for I propose to achieve your liberty somehow. I purpose getting you out of that prison, and once you are out I shall set my dogs on you—my anarchist dogs, you know. I might leave you there in prison, but I fear you are enjoying yourself too much there, knowing as you do that you are safe from me and my friends.

" 'There, that is all for the present, Michael. You may inform the warden —only he will read it before you do—that when everything is in readiness, I shall blow a breach through his prison walls that he can drive a hearse through. I shall do it with one of our little bombs, too; and then, when I get my hands on you, Michael—well, you will wish you were back again inside the prison, in a dark cell, living on bread and water, instead of in my power. One thing I do wish to tell you: It was not I who killed your sister Zara, and I did not know about it till after it was done. I did not strike Philip, either, although I sat beside him when it was done. You may believe or not, as you please. ZENOBIA.' "*

"I don't observe anything especially silly about that letter," said the detective, when Michael had finished reading it.

"I call her threats silly, don't you?"

"I'm not so sure about that. I think she means every word she has written."

"Do you, really?"

"Yes."

"She is a dangerous young woman, I'm afraid, sir."

"There is no sort of doubt about that."

"I thought you should know at once about it. Of course I did not know that you already had information on the subject."

"I would not have had it but for the accident of Patsy's encountering her. I have heard nothing from the authorities about it, as yet."

"May I make a suggestion to you, sir?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Zenobia does not threaten you in this letter save by implication; but I am convinced that she will attempt you harm."

"Very likely. I have thought of it, also."

"Then you will the more readily listen to my suggestion."

"When you have told me what it is—yes."

"This: Keep a guard at the front and rear of your house night and day until she is recaptured."

"Eh? Oh, I don't think that is necessary."

"I do, Mr. Carter. Remember, I know more about the anarchists than even you do; because I have met with them. I know their methods."

"Yes; I understand that."

"Zenobia was raised on a diet of bombs. I have heard that her mother, although a Russian princess, was a very demon of terrorists. I know that Zenobia inherits all those qualities. She likes to scatter death around her, just for the mere pleasure of hearing the explosions. I have heard her so declare. There is a man who makes them for her. She calls him 'the expert.' I have never heard him called by any other name."

"Yes. I have heard of him. He was at that meeting last night."

"Well, he manufactures bombs of all sizes and shapes. He covers them with leather so they will resemble baseballs; he packs them in Huyler's candy-boxes; he wraps them in mica and rolls them in tissue paper; he arranges them in any form so that they may not be recognized for what they are, *and Zenobia is never without at least one in her possession.*"

"That is a point worth knowing, Michael."

"Yes; and also worth guarding against. But to return to the subject of a guard over the front and rear of your house. I wish you would promise me that you will maintain it."

"All right. I'll telephone to headquarters presently and ask them to assign me a couple of men with two others to relieve them. Will that satisfy you?"

"Yes."

"Now, about this expert. Do you happen to know him by sight?"

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*The history of this affair is told in No. 604 of NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "The Convict's Secret."

"No; I never saw him. He never visited our group in Philadelphia. I only know about him."

"That is too bad. I was in hopes that you could identify him for me. There is another man, too, whom I would like to spot. He is rather a tall man with a particularly heavy voice and he is desperately in love with Zenobia. So deeply in love with her, in fact, that last night, after he was selected as the 'instrument' for their decree, he told her in private that he would save his third bomb for her, and blow her to pieces unless she promised to become his wife if he returned safely. Do you know such a man?"

CHAPTER VI.

NICK CARTER DEVELOPS A LITTLE PLAN.

"Do you happen to know such a man?" the detective repeated, after a pause during which Michael did not reply.

"I was trying to think, sir; that is, I was trying to think if there was any way by which I could place him, but I fear there is not."

"You have heard of such a person, then?"

"Oh, yes. I have heard Zenobia speak of him, with the utmost loathing. I think she fears him as well as hates him. Without doubt it is the same man."

"I think so."

"But I have never seen him nor have I heard his name mentioned, that I can remember. I have heard her refer to him as a Russian bear, and also as a French hound, so I think he is a mixture of both nationalities. I have also heard her say that he has a voice like a fog-horn, so it must be the same man."

"Michael, Zenobia, whatever her faults, is still your half-sister. Your father became her father, and——"

"Mr. Carter, pardon me for interrupting you. I have heard that blood is thicker than water, but her blood is not legitimate blood. Furthermore, my father was a scoundrel who deserted my mother for her mother. Still further, in spite of what Zenobia says in this letter, there is no particle of doubt in my mind that it was she who killed my own sister. I do not consider that she bears any relation to me whatever; but admitting that she does, it is all the more reason why she should be prevented from committing more crimes."

"I was going to ask you if you cared to assist me in recapturing her."

"Yes; I greatly desire to do so. Not for vengeance, mind you, but in order that she may be rendered harmless for the future."

"Very good. I will find a way to use you. Now, Michael, will you reply to some questions for me, relative to the secrets of anarchy?"

"Yes. Any that you may ask."

"First, then, with what you know about the order, could you apply at any group and by making use of the knowledge you have, work your way into a meeting?"

"Yes."

"Without danger?"

"No; not without danger."

"Why not?"

"Because I would be obliged to tell my name and address, and also the name and number of the group to which I belong. More than likely the secretary would have a record of my own group with him, and by referring to it he would at once know that I am not in good standing, according to their standards; he would know that I should be in prison instead of at their meeting, and—it would likely go hard with me."

"But, so far as the secret, and passwords, and grips and signs and tokens, and all that, you could pass muster so far as they are concerned?"

"Oh, yes."

"Sure?"

"Yes. Perfectly sure."

"Could you instruct me so that I could do it?"

"Yes."

"How long would it take you to do that?"

"An hour or two."

"Good. Now another point: Paterson, New Jersey, is generally regarded as the hotbed of anarchy in this locality, isn't it?"

"The headquarters are there."

"For the entire country, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever been there?"

"At headquarters? No; but I have visited two of the groups in Paterson."

"That is what I mean. I want you to go over to Paterson right away, Michael."

"You do? What for?"

"I want you to go over there and pick up an anarchist for me. Do you think you can do the trick?"

"I don't understand you, Mr. Carter."

"I want you to find an anarchist who has a clean record that I can use; to find such a one and on any pretext you care to use, bring him here to this house.

I will not harm him, and when I have done with him, he shall be set free again, if you like, in case there is no definite reason for detaining him. But I want such a man, because I wish to borrow his name and address and record."

"I understand you now. There are two rather weighty objections to the plan, however."

"What are they?"

"The first one is that the man I brought here might be known to some of the members of the group you wish to visit. Zenobia has a very wide acquaintance among them."

"Well, you must try to find me one who is not likely to be known. A new member, or a visiting member from some other city."

"That might be possible; but the other objection still obtains."

"What is that one?"

"I did not tell you—I meant to do so but it slipped my mind—that when a person, man or woman, joins the anarchists, he or she, as the case may be, is given a name. It is called the 'cause name,' and it is never used save on entering a meeting. For instance, my 'cause name' is 'Moritz.' Now, you see, even if I should succeed in inducing such a man as you have described to come here to this house where you would make a temporary prisoner of him, and even though he had previously given me his name and address, and the name and number of his group, I could not obtain his 'cause name.' He would not tell it to me if I asked him, and if I should ask such a question, he would be instantly suspicious, and would lose no time in reporting the fact."

"H'm! They guard themselves rather well, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Isn't there some manner in which the information could be wormed out of such a man?"

"I know of no way."

"Are records of the 'cause names' kept, as well as the other information?"

"Yes."

"How would it do for me to use yours—Moritz, you said it was?"

"Yes. It would not do at all. You would be instantly spotted. The cause names are alphabetically arranged like a dictionary."

"Well, Michael, I wish to try the experiment anyhow. If it is your desire to assist me in this matter, I want you to start for Paterson within the next half-hour and see what you can accomplish. If you can pick up a man who hails from Chicago, or San Francisco, or New Orleans, or any distant point, do so, and induce him to come here. Make him think that he is wanted at a meeting of some group."

"I might have the good fortune to get in with a foreigner who has lately arrived."

"That would be the very thing, Michael."

"The only difficulty about that is that French is the only language I speak, except my own."

"Well, French will go a great way toward helping you. Many foreigners who were never in France have a smattering of the language; and as for me, I speak nearly all the modern languages. I was brought up on them. It was one of my father's hobbies. If you could run across a Hungarian, or an Austrian, or a Spaniard who is also an anarchist, it would be the very thing. Anyhow, I want you to try, and we'll take our chances on finding out the fellow's 'cause name.' I think we can do it, too, once we get him here."

"Suppose you go to Paterson with me?"

"No; I can't very well do that. Oh, by the way."

"Yes?"

"You told me once that a group of anarchists always have a specific place of meeting—I don't mean for their regular meeting, I mean that there is always an appointed place outside, somewhere in the city, that is agreed upon, so that if one says to another 'I will be at the appointed place at such a time,' the other one knows where that place is."

"Yes; that is true."

"Well, last night at the meeting, Zenobia told the 'instrument' that she would meet him with a closed carriage 'at the appointed place' at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Now, I wonder if there is any way in which I can find out where that 'appointed place' is located."

Michael shook his head with emphasis.

"No," he said. "They did not themselves know where it was, when the appointment was made."

"Eh? How is that?"

"Because the 'appointed place' is the last thing given out at a meeting of a group. It serves its purpose only until they meet again, whether the interval is a day or a month."

"I see."

"When the place is selected, the announcement is made in a whisper, by the 'Sir' or 'Madam' who happens to be the ruler of that group. It is then passed along from one to another also in whispers."

"Then that is out of the question. What sort of places are selected?"

"Any place at all where a meeting of two persons is not likely to attract attention. At a crowded corner; in a park; at a railway-station; anywhere at all."

"In this case she was to go to him in a closed carriage, and he was to enter it with her when she signaled to him."

"Well, it might be anywhere from the Battery to Harlem."

"All right. There was another appointment made last night, also. It was between the 'expert' and Zenobia. He was to go to her to-night at midnight and take with him the three bombs that the 'instrument' is to use in carrying out the decree."

"That meeting would doubtless be at the house where she is staying."

"Very likely. I wish I could guess where it is."

"I wish I could guess it for you. By the way, Mr. Carter, do you mind telling me what the decree is that is to be carried out?"

"They are to blow a hole through the wall of the prison where Vassili and Tomschk are confined, and so liberate them; and incidentally, any one who interferes is to be blown to atoms by a second bomb. The third one was intended for the 'instrument's' defense. He threatened to throw it at Zenobia's feet if she did not promise to marry him if he escaped with his life."

"And she promised?"

"Yes."

"Then you may be sure that he will not escape with his life. She will see to it that he has no chance of doing so, even if she has to hurl one of her own supply at *his* feet."

"That is about the way in which I sized up the situation, Michael."

"Shall I go now, Mr. Carter?"

"Yes. And be sure to bring me back a good subject for my plans."

"I will try. I will do the best I can."

"Look out for yourself, too. If you should happen to run afoul of any of your old anarchistic friends, it might not be pleasant."

CHAPTER VII.

NICK CARTER'S MASTERLY TACT.

Nick Carter was perfectly well satisfied in his own mind that the only way in which it would be possible to prevent the anarchists from carrying out at least a part of their perfected plans in reference to blowing up the prison was to manage to forestall them. To accomplish this he could not afford to lose any time, for the hour was approaching when these human fiends would act.

The "expert" was to go with the three bombs to Zenobia the coming night; she was to meet the "instrument" at ten, the following morning, and therefore the man—and doubtless Zenobia, also—might be expected to depart for Washington at any time after that hour.

He called Patsy to him again after the departure of Michael and said to him:

"Patsy, I want you to go down to headquarters and see the commissioner. Get from him a list of the names of the known anarchists and their addresses; also a list of the socialists with anarchistic tendencies. There are many such."

"Yes."

"Then ask Captain McCafferty to detail a man to assist you and so make a house to house canvas of the city. It is barely possible, though not probable, that you may find Zenobia at one of them."

"I don't think it likely, chief."

"Nor do I; but it is a possibility which ought not to be neglected. Report to me as soon as you have finished."

Suddenly the detective started to his feet with an exclamation. He had remembered Orloff.

Patsy's account of the man had entirely slipped his mind for the time being, but now he recalled all that had been said about him, and also the apparently meaningless remark of one of the men who had passed Patsy on the street while he was watching.

The man had said, "He always was a little queer." Nick wondered now how queer he might be, and if it were not possible to make some use of him, or to get information out of him.

He had already telephoned for Danny to bring the automobile around so that it would be in readiness in case he had use for it; and in two minutes he was out of the house and driving rapidly toward the white building in Mulberry Street.

He went at once to the inspector in charge and rapidly reported everything that had occurred since Patsy's discovery that Zenobia was at liberty; and then he said:

"I wish, inspector, that you would have Orloff brought here to your room where we can both interview him."

"I will, of course; but a better idea occurs to me, Nick," replied the inspector.

"What is it?"

"Why not set the man at liberty and shadow him?"

"I had thought of that, and ordinarily it would be the better method. But unfortunately, in this particular case it cannot be done."

"Why not?"

"Because the instant he got into communication with his friends he would tell them what happened, and that would put them so thoroughly on their guard that they would alter all the plans they have made, and we would be up a tree again."

"Will not the mere fact of his disappearance have precisely the same result?"

"I don't think so, inspector."

"Why not?"

"Because, as the case stands, the man has merely disappeared. He is thought among them to be a 'little queer.' It is their impression that he has merely wandered away. As the case stands they do not suspect that he was *taken* away from that house. There was nothing there to suggest that Orloff had been attacked. They found everything as it had been save only that Orloff was gone; but there was no evidence that a spy had been there. You can rely upon it that they are searching the city for him."

The inspector rang his bell and gave instructions that Orloff be brought to them; and after a little he appeared, haggard, crestfallen, sullen, almost ferocious of aspect, with dull, moodily angry eyes.

He was just as he had been thrust into his cell at a very early hour that morning, and Nick saw at a glance that the beard he wore was false, that his hair had been colored, and that there were other evidences about him of a very poor attempt at disguising himself.

The detective stepped forward instantly and tore away the false beard; then he pointed toward the set basin on the lavatory of the office, and said:

"Over there are soap, towels, and water. Go and scrub yourself. If you do not, I'll have two or three men in here to do it for you, and I'll promise you that it won't be pleasant."

The fellow hesitated for a moment; then he obeyed; and all the time he was thus engaged Nick stood within reach of him, prepared to prevent any demonstration the man might attempt to make.

Within ten minutes he was a changed man.

He looked twenty years younger—in fact, he proved to be quite a young man. His face was smoothly shaven, his hair was flaxen, and save for the expression of sullen ferocity which he still retained, he was not a bad-looking chap.

A glance told the detective that the man was a Pole, and so he addressed him in that language, and he used a kindly tone, smiling as he spoke, and not at all in the words the man had doubtless expected to hear.

"Perhaps," he said, "you have friends where you least expect to find them. You need not be afraid to talk to me in your own language. This man who is here with us does not understand it, although it is better that we speak in a low tone, since there are persons around this building who do speak Polish."

The man's eyes brightened perceptibly, although there was a look of suspicion in them for all that. He opened his mouth to speak, but thought better of it, and closed it again; and Nick made another effort.

"What is the name and number of your group?" he asked.

"Warsaw, twelve," he replied. "What do you know about it?"

"I know, for example, that if we were in the right place and surrounded by the proper conditions I would ask you also to give me your 'cause name.' I may not do that now. Has any person attempted to make you talk since you were brought here?"

"No. I would not do so if they had."

"I know that. But——"

"Who are you? I do not know you. Why do you question me?"

"Because I would be your friend if you let me. You do not wish to remain here in prison, do you?"

"No; and they have no right to keep me."

"People, particularly the police, often do things which they have no right to do. You understand that as well as I; otherwise our groups would not need to exist."

"Are you one of us?" demanded the prisoner eagerly.

"That is as it may be," responded the detective, with a shrug of his shoulders. "I was told this morning that an anarchist was here, in a cell. I did not know until this morning that you were here."

"I thought when you first spoke to me that it was likely you who captured me and brought me here."

"No. I repeat that I did not know of your existence until the breakfast hour this morning."

"Who told you about it then?"

"One who was present at the meeting of the group last night."

"Then it is known by them that I am here?"

"No; they know only of your disappearance; they do not know where you are. What is your wish about it? Is it that I should convey any message to any of your friends?"

"No. I do not trust you. I do not know you. If you would prove to me that you are one of us, then——"

"Would that be possible here, in the presence of this officer?"

"No."

"Then why talk foolishly?"

"Nevertheless I do not trust you."

"You are not to be blamed for that. I see that you have been only a very short time in this country. Possibly when you have been here longer, you will learn to have more discernment."

"I have been here almost a year."

"And I have been here all my life. Now, do you wish me to take any message for you?"

"Yes."

"To whom?"

"To the man who told you of my presence here; to the man you say was at the meeting of the group last night," was the instant reply, and Nick with difficulty repressed a smile at the shrewdness of the fellow; but he responded:

"Very well. I will do so. What is the message you would send?"

"Ask him to come here to see me."

"But I think he would not wish to do that?"

"Why not? What would be the danger?"

"I can only reply that he was in the outer cellar with madam—with her you call your queen, with Zenobia—after she had pinned the rosette over the heart of him who was selected as the instrument to carry out the decree."

"Ah!" The prisoner was visibly affected by this information. It proved to him that the man before him knew what he was talking about. It suggested to him that his interlocutor might be the real thing after all.

"Now," said Nick, "what message shall I take to him?"

"Ask him to send a friend to see me."

"He has already done that. I am here."

"But I do not know you. I do not trust you."

"Very well," replied Nick. "I would not force your confidence, nor shall I come to see you again. But I will tell you what might be done, if you desire it."

"Well?"

Nick stepped suddenly quite close to the young man, and, bending forward with lips close to his ear, he whispered:

"If you will tell me how, I will send word to madam that Orloff is here——"

The prisoner started back a step with a half-uttered cry; then he whispered:

"You know my 'cause name'?" he exclaimed; "and you dare to utter it here?"

"To convince you," replied Nick, again in a whisper. He had had no idea that Orloff was the "cause" name of the man; but why should it not be, since Patsy had learned the name only by hearing him referred to while the meeting was in progress? Nick continued: "If I do that for you, she will doubtless send you money and assistance at once. Remember, however, I do not know where to find her."

The man was silent a moment, in deep thought. Then he replied slowly:

"There is a shoemaker in Fifteenth Street, south side, just east of First Avenue, in the basement. Go to him. Say that Thaddeus Morawitz sent you. Give him the message you have mentioned and he will deliver it. But I warn you that you will have to prove yourself to him."

"That will be easy enough," replied the detective, thinking that he would get instruction from Michael before he made the attempt. And he turned abruptly away while Orloff was taken from the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRYING ORDEAL.

As the detective was in the act of leaving the office of the inspector—to whom, of course, he had reviewed the conversation with the prisoner in Polish—he met Patsy in the corridor, who was just leaving the commissioner's office where he had obtained the information which Nick had told him to procure.

"Patsy," he announced, "I have changed my plans. It will not be necessary to make that house to house canvas after all, although the list you have may come in handy later on. We will call it off for the present. I have another commission for you, and it must be done at once. Come along with me, and I will tell you about it as we go home. The car is at the door waiting."

When they were seated in the car, the detective continued:

"As soon as you reach the house I want you to fix yourself to look like an East Side lad—not too tough. Then wrap an old pair of shoes in a newspaper and take them to a shoemaker who is located in the basement at the south side of Fifteenth Street just east of First Avenue. Insist upon waiting while he fixes them, so don't ask that too much be done. Make the man talk on any subject at all, no matter what, so long as you hear his voice. The man will be one of those who were present at that meeting last night and if possible I wish you to identify that voice of his."

"If I happened to hear it. There were a score of men, and three women there last night. I don't think I heard more than five or six of the voices."

"Well, do as I have directed."

"All right."

"I shall follow behind you. I will enter the place while you are there, but because of your presence I will utter a few words in Polish and depart immediately. When your shoes are mended, return home. That's all."

It was an hour later when Nick Carter entered the shoemaker's place in Fifteenth Street, following Patsy's entrance by a few minutes only.

Nick entered briskly and quickly, but paused abruptly as soon as he was inside the door, and with a glance toward Patsy, as if he did not relish the presence of strangers, he said rapidly in Polish, to the shoemaker:

"I have a message for you from Thaddeus Morawitz. I will return at six this evening to deliver it."

Then, before the shoemaker could reply, he stepped outside again and hurried away.

But he had accomplished two things by that call. He had spotted the man so that he would know him again under any circumstances, and he had also made sure that the shoemaker would be there to receive him when he should call at six o'clock, after the return of Michael, and consequently after he had received the instructions necessary to "prove" himself.

He had been back in his own house only a short time when Patsy arrived, and his eyes were shining with the importance of the discovery he had made.

"Chief," he exclaimed, as soon as he entered the study where Nick was awaiting him, "that was about the luckiest move we ever made. What I cannot understand is how in the world you got on the track of that shoemaker."

"Never mind that at present. Was his voice one of the few you heard at the meeting?"

"You bet it was! The very one we most wanted to find, too."

"What! The 'instrument'?"

"No. The 'expert.'"

"Well, that *is* luck. The 'expert,' eh? And at midnight to-night he goes to call upon Zenobia with the three bombs in his possession. I am surprised that he was not occupied in manufacturing them instead of mending shoes."

"I think he was. When I entered the shop he was in the room back of the partition, and he was not at all pleased at the interruption. At first he refused point-blank to do my repairing; said he was busy; but when I told him that I would sit down and wait till he could do the work, he consented to put on the patch. It's a bum job. He isn't much of a shoemaker."

"No. I suppose not. Bombs are his specialty. What did you talk about while you were with him?"

"Nothing particular. The weather; the Russo-Japanese war, the trusts, and so forth. But I spotted instantly the timid voice of the man who is called the 'expert.'"

"Did he make any remark about me, after my sudden entrance and departure?"

"No; but he was plainly excited and also considerably troubled. He half-rose from his seat on the bench as if to run after you, but he thought better of it, and I heard him mutter to himself in Polish, 'Six o'clock.' He did it several times. He will be there awaiting you, all right. He only answered me in monosyllables after that."

"I discovered by the name over his door that he was a Pole. I suspected it before, because your 'Orloff' is one, and they seem to be friends. Patsy, the whole case looks rather easy now; eh?"

"It certainly presents fewer obstacles."

"The 'expert' should take me to Zenobia to-night at midnight, and to-morrow morning at ten, she should conduct me to the 'instrument.' Then with you and Chick and myself on their several trails, we should have no difficulty in catching them red-handed, if I decide to wait that long before making an arrest."

It was a quarter past four when Michael returned—alone.

"It was of no use," he announced as soon as he was inside the study door. "I could not discover a man in Paterson whom I thought it advisable to attempt to bring here. We will have to think up some other plan."

"There is one formed already, Michael," replied Nick, with a smile. "It isn't likely that the man who is called the 'expert' will have a list of the 'cause' names in his possession, is it?"

"No; not at all."

"Well, I have succeeded in spotting him. I am going at six o'clock to call upon him. Now get busy, Michael, and instruct me so that I can satisfy the curiosity and reply to all the questions of the 'expert.' He will doubtless want to prove me; eh?"

"He is sure to."

Nick Carter has the ability to absorb knowledge quickly, and half an hour after Michael began his instruction he announced that he could pass muster all right as an anarchist, in any place save at a regular meeting of a group.

Now, as the reader knows, Nick Carter thoroughly disliked to make any statement, under any circumstances, that was not literally the truth; but in the pursuit of his profession, there naturally arose occasions when the truth could not be told; at least, all of it. When deception had to be practised in order that good might come of it. "To do a great right, do a little wrong" is a maxim that he sometimes was compelled to practise, and this was one of them.

He could not go to the shoemaker and tell him frankly what had happened to Thaddeus Morawitz, for that would put the people he wished to capture on their guard, and so he determined that he must, in the conversation that was to take place at six that evening, manage to convey a wrong impression of the facts of the case.

When he arrived at the shoemaker's he found the expert anxiously awaiting him; and as Nick entered the man sprang quickly forward, exclaiming:

"Ah! At last! At last!"

Then he locked the door, withdrawing the key as he did so, and drew the curtains so that no one could peer in from the street.

Having accomplished all that he glided quickly and with catlike motions to a chair that was behind his bench, thus placing it between them, and as he seated himself upon it he took from a pocket in his apron a round, leather-covered object that resembled a baseball.

This he held in his hand that rested on his lap, and Nick knew it to be one of those terrible, death-dealing bombs in the manufacture of which this shoemaker was an expert.

Plainly the man did not intend that his caller should play him any tricks; and it was quite as evident that unless Nick could satisfy him that his purpose in coming there was legitimate, the bomb would be used, even though it dealt out death to both of them.

The light of a fanaticism glistened in the eyes of the shoemaker. He was a madman on the one subject to which he had devoted his energies and his talents. Nick could see that very plainly.

He felt that it was fortunate that he had not gone there to that shop without thorough instructions, and with the hope of bluffing it through. Such a course as that would never have succeeded, and Nick Carter would never have left that basement room alive.

"Now," said the expert. "Thaddeus Morawitz, you said! What of him?"

"He is in prison," replied Nick quietly. "Or, rather, he is confined at the headquarters of the police, in Mulberry Street."

The shoemaker nodded.

"I know where it is," he said. "Why is Thaddeus there?"

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"I talked with him in the presence of an official of the police," he said. They were conversing in the Polish tongue. "Naturally there could not be much said, although we talked in a language that the officer did not understand. But there was very little time."

"Why is he there? Tell me that?"

"He suddenly felt very badly while he was standing guard. Later he went out into the air. He became unconscious. He could not speak to explain what had happened to him. A policeman came upon the scene. A patrol-wagon was summoned. Thaddeus was taken away. He is better now. He does not know with what he is charged. It might be that he was thought to be just drunk. But he wants money and assistance. He told me to come to you and to say that Thaddeus Morawitz sent him."

The shoemaker was visibly relieved, but his suspicions were by no means at rest. He said haltingly:

"It is a relief to know where he is. He disappeared mysteriously. Now, how is it that you discovered him, and that he sent you to me?"

"Until this morning at seven o'clock I did not know that such a person as Thaddeus Morawitz existed. Then—but no, it was later than that—I had business at the headquarters of police. I saw him there and I spoke to him in his own language. That is all. The rest you know."

"How did he happen to send you to me?"

"You will have to ask him that question."

"Are you one of us, and one with us?" was the next question, and the little man leaned forward in his chair and fixed his burning eyes fiercely upon the detective's face as he asked it, while at the same time he drew his right arm slightly backward, holding the bomb in that hand, ready to hurl it at the detective.

"Try me," replied Nick laconically.

The shoemaker rose slowly to his feet. He changed the bomb from his right hand to his left, still holding it ready for use. Then he extended his right hand and laid it limply in Nick's palm.

The detective, acting under the instructions given him by Michael, quickly gave the necessary touches and pressures, and when the shoemaker responded to them, followed them up by others; and so they continued to stand there exchanging grip-signals, but never uttering a word until at last the shoemaker stepped back again to his chair with a sigh of relief, and resumed his seat.

Nick felt that he was passing muster in very good shape.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EFFECT OF PRACTISING KINDNESS.

But the examination was not yet completed.

"Tell me the name and number of your group," was the next demand upon the detective.

"Warsaw, twelve," replied Nick boldly.

"Ha! The same group as Thaddeus!" exclaimed the expert.

"Yes."

"Then you know his 'cause' name?"

"Yes."

"Will you give it to me?"

"I will spell it with you," replied Nick, following the instructions he had received.

"Begin."

"F," said the detective.

"O," replied the shoemaker.

"F," said Nick again.

"R," responded the other.

"O," repeated Nick after him.

"L," said the expert.

(The reader will notice that while the detective began to spell at the end of the name, the shoemaker began at the beginning in making his responses. One not having knowledge of the name would not have been able to place the letters correctly, but it will be seen that by placing all the letters used in their proper positions, they spelled the name "Orloff.")

"And your own 'cause name'?" asked the shoemaker.'

"I could not give it to you here."

"It is well, my brother." The shoemaker left his seat and deposited the bomb on a shelf that was within his reach. Then he added: "I will go with you to see Thaddeus."

The detective had not bargained for this, but his reply was ready, nevertheless.

"It would not be possible to see him to-night," he said. "We may go there in the morning. To-night, it is so late, we would not be admitted."

"No? Then in the morning. Shall it be so?"

"You may go there alone in the morning if you like. I cannot go before the afternoon."

"I will wait. At what hour shall it be?"

"Meet me at the entrance—or no."

"Yes. At the entrance to the building in Mulberry Street. Shall we say at three o'clock? Will that do?"

"Yes," replied the detective. He knew that some engagement must be made with the man; and now he remarked, as if it were a second thought:

"It is not a good place to meet, particularly if one of us should be detained a few minutes. There are so many policemen around there, and they are inquisitive."

"You are right; but——"

"You have an 'appointed place' my brother," said Nick insinuatingly. "Whisper it to me and I will meet you there instead. Then we will go to see Thaddeus together."

"But it is far from where we wish to go."

"We will meet each other earlier," replied Nick.

"At half-past two?"

"Yes."

"Then at half-past two at the appointed place?"

"Yes; when you have whispered to me to tell me where it is."

The shoemaker leaned forward in his chair and whispered:

"Beside the statue of Columbus, at Columbus Circle."

"Good. I will be there."

"It is to be regretted that money cannot be sent to Thaddeus to-night," murmured the shoemaker. "It is strange that you did not give him some yourself, when you were there to-day."

"One does not always carry money about with them, and one is not always supplied," replied Nick quickly.

"True."

"And, in any case, the police officer was there also.

After conversing in Polish with Thaddeus—you know—if I had given him money then; well, I did not."

"Well, he must wait till to-morrow afternoon, then."

"No. If you will write something on a slip of paper to let him understand that it comes from you, I will send him some in the morning. The group can repay me later."

The shoemaker scribbled a line in Polish on the back of a card and gave it to Nick.

"Use that," he said. "Now I would like to ask you something."

"Well?"

"You are not a Pole?"

"No."

"How comes it, then, that you are a member of Warsaw group?"

"I have been in Warsaw many times, my friend. Need you ask me that question?"

"No; you have satisfied me."

"I will go now," said the detective, rising.

"Don't forget. At the appointed place at two-thirty to-morrow."

"Yes."

"If I am not there, you will know that I have ceased to live."

"And I, as well."

The door was unlocked, the curtains raised again, and Nick passed out upon the street, feeling that he had accomplished about as pretty a piece of work as he had ever undertaken.

It had been fraught with its dangers, too, for the little shoemaker would not have hesitated to destroy them both with his bomb had his suspicions been sufficiently aroused.

As he passed along toward the corner, Nick almost collided with a rough-looking character who was lounging near it, and as he passed him he whispered quickly:

"Don't lose sight of him for an instant, Chick. He will probably disguise himself when he makes ready to come out. Where is Patsy?"

"Across the street."

"One of you must telephone if he leaves his shop before I return here. Don't let him get away from you."

"No."

Nick hurried on, turned down First Avenue to Fourteenth and boarded a west-bound car.

He changed at the subway and left the train at Bleecker Street from whence he hurried around to headquarters.

The line which the shoemaker had written on the card in Polish announced:

"This man has been tried;" the message was signed with a character which meant nothing to Nick Carter.

At headquarters he was, of course, permitted to descend alone to the cells, and presently he was looking through the bars into the eyes of Thaddeus.

They greeted each other calmly, and Nick, who had already placed the card together with four five-dollar bills, in an envelope, passed it through to the prisoner without comment.

But as soon as Thaddeus realized what the contents were and had read the message, he relaxed entirely, and thrusting one hand through between the bars he gave and received the same series of grips that Nick had exchanged with the shoemaker.

"You are a friend and brother indeed," he said, "but it is miraculous that you should have found me here as you did."

"Perhaps it is not as miraculous as you think," replied Nick, smiling. "Here is a blank card and a pencil. I wish you to write upon it a few words which our friend the 'expert' will recognize as coming from you."

"Why? Is it necessary?"

"No. But he is to make a certain call to-night, at twelve o'clock. Perhaps you know what it is; no?"

"Yes."

"Your case will be mentioned. I want him to know that I have seen you and given you money."

Thaddeus accepted the card, and as the shoemaker had done, scribbled a line upon it in Polish, which the detective placed in his pocket without glancing at it.

"Now I must go away," he said.

"Wait, please," said Thaddeus. "Tell me how it is that you are permitted so many liberties in this terrible place."

"That," replied the detective, "must remain my secret—for the present. By the way, Thaddeus, if I knew where to find madam I would go to her at once for you, and not leave it till the expert calls at midnight."

"It is as well to leave it to him, I think," was the reply.

"Possibly; only he has other things to think of, then."

"Why did you not suggest it to him while you were talking with him?"

"Possibly because it did not occur to me."

"Well, ask him when you take my message to him, that I have given to you. I have no right to mention the address, even to you who have done so much for me."

"Very well. Good night."

"Good night."

"Can I send anything to you? Is there anything that you would like at once?"

"Yes. Something to smoke."

"What do you want? Cigars? A pipe? Cigarettes?"

"A pipe and some tobacco."

"You shall have them at once. Is that all?"

"A book to read, and a candle, if they would permit me to have them."

"I will try. Can you read English?"

"Oh, yes; perfectly well."

"You are an educated man, of good family, Thaddeus; no?"

"Yes. Of the best."

"You should return to Poland, to your own people."

"I would to Heaven that I might do so!" was the fervent response.

"Would you go?"

"At once. To-night, if it were possible—and if the group would permit it."

"Suppose I could secure the permission for you and find the passage-money? Would you consider that a friendly act?"

"I would bless you all the days of my life. If I could return to my mother and sisters, and not feel that the sword of Damocles was hanging over me, I would be the happiest young man on earth."

"It shall be done, Thaddeus. I promise you that on my honor. There is a ship that sails to-morrow at one o'clock, for Kiel. You shall be a passenger on that ship."

To Nick's infinite astonishment, the young man burst into a passion of tears such as no sort of suffering could have drawn from him. But he controlled himself in a moment, and with his face pressed between the bars of his cell door he whispered: "Come closer."

The detective obeyed, and then Thaddeus whispered something sharply in his ear which brought a smile to the detective's face.

Thaddeus had whispered the address of Zenobia Zara.

CHAPTER X.

A WALKING INFERNO.

Nick Carter rapped at the door of the shoemaker's shop in Fifteenth Street half an hour later, having paused long enough at the corner to whisper a few words to Chick, who was still on watch.

"Go over and tell Patsy that he must keep the watch alone," he had said. "I have other work for you to do. I already know Zenobia's address, but the shoemaker must be shadowed just the same, for there is always the chance that she might have changed it; but one of you will suffice."

"What is it that you wish me to do?" Chick had asked.

"Go down to Pier 21-A where you will find the steamship *Eitel Fritz*. Find the purser, and fee him liberally to reserve a first-class cabin and passage for Hans Sichel—that is an assumed name, of course—for to-morrow. Pay him the money and take a receipt for it. He will attend to it all for you, for an extra five-dollar bill. Say to him that you wish to take Herr Sichel aboard the ship to-night, and give him another five-dollar bill for that. Understand?"

"Yes."

"Then go to police headquarters, to the inspector in charge—I have arranged it all so there will be no hitch—and he will turn the prisoner Orloff over to you. Tell him that you are sent by the friend who promised that he should return to Poland by that ship. Then take him to the vessel and tell him the orders are that he is to remain inside his room until after the ship has sailed. When you have done all that, give him fifty dollars in money, and say that it is to pay his way through Germany to Poland, after he arrives on the other side. Tell him that I wish him to send me a line promising that he will go directly to his mother and sisters. That is all. Be off now. Got money enough in your clothes?"

"Yes."

"All right. See Patsy, and then go."

It was then that Nick passed on to the door of the shoemaker's shop and rapped upon the door.

At first there was no response, but when he had repeated the summons a second time, more loudly than before, he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and presently the timid voice of the terrorist inquired through the closed door:

"Who is there?"

"I," replied Nick. "From Thaddeus."

His voice must have been recognized, for the door opened instantly, and he passed inside; but the face of the expert did not promise a hearty welcome.

"I am very busy," he said. "Why have you returned?"

"To bring you this," replied the detective, handing him the card on which Thaddeus had inscribed the line of writing, and which, of course, the detective had previously read.

The face of the shoemaker cleared perceptibly when he read what was written there.

"Come inside," he said. "It will do no harm that you should see me at my work. You saw Thaddeus again?"

"Yes."

Nick had followed the little man into the rear room—a close and stuffy place it was, and smelling strongly of chemicals.

There was a low, square table or bench in the middle of the room, and scattered upon it was all the paraphernalia of his nefarious practises. As the detective glanced around him he realized that there was enough explosives in that one room to blow the entire section of the block to pieces.

On shelves around the room were all sorts and shapes of receptacles for the different kinds of explosives, which, when packed, became converted into destroying bombs.

But Nick looked around him with calmness, evincing none of the uneasiness he felt, for it was certainly a creepy place.

"He is well?" asked the expert, indicating a seat which the detective accepted, taking care, however, to get into it with caution lest he should jar down something in that room.

"Yes."

"You thought it best to take the money to him in person?"

"Yes; to be sure that he received it. Also I found that he wanted a pipe and some tobacco, and a book to read."

"You procured them for him?"

"He will be supplied in the morning."

"It is well. I thank you. Has it occurred to you that you have not yet told me your own name?"

"It is Nicholas."

"Thank you. Did you tell Thaddeus that we would call to see him to-morrow?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"There was not much time. Besides, it is not well always to anticipate things."

"That is a good philosophy. You perceive that I am busy with the work I love?"

"I don't think I should like to do it, though," replied Nick, with truth.

"No? Perhaps not. Look around you." He waved his hand toward the shelves. "There is sufficient explosive here to destroy an army, almost."

"Aren't you afraid that some one will penetrate to this room and discover what is here?"

"No. If a stranger penetrated to this room he would never leave it alive."

"But you would be killed, also."

"That would not matter—very much."

"But in your absence some one might enter this room."

"If, during my absence, any person attempted to open a door or a window in this room, or to open that door to enter here, the entire house would instantly be blown to atoms," was the calm reply.

Nick shuddered.

"Do you always leave it that way when you go out?"

"Always."

"You take great precautions, my friend."

"I take more than I have told you."

"Indeed?"

"Yes. For instance, it would not be safe for an officer ever to try to arrest me."

"I suppose not, after what you have said."

"I never leave this place without being fully prepared. I usually carry a small bomb in each coat pocket; but besides those I am never without another one that is made to fit my body so that it will not show. I wear it just beneath my waistcoat, and to it are attached strings. I can find the end of one of those cords in any pocket, and I would only have to pull one of them in order to blow myself and all who were within twenty or thirty feet of me to pieces."

"Goodness!" exclaimed Nick, with sincerity. "I should think you would be afraid that you might jerk one of those strings by accident some time."

"No. I am accustomed to them."

"But, what good would it do you to kill the officer who tried to arrest you if you were killed yourself?"

The little old man smiled.

"It would perhaps be better," he said. "I am sometimes tired of life. I have nothing left to live for save what you see me doing now; and I am sometimes tired of that. And then if one wishes to die, the bomb is the easiest and the quickest way. People call it terrible, but that is only because it mutilates. It is the easiest death of all, because it is so sudden."

"I suppose there is something in that."

"The shock of it benumbs the nerves so there is no sensation of pain; and what matters the mutilation after one is dead?"

"I really don't suppose it matters much, unless to the friends one leaves behind."

"But I have no friends—that is, none for whom I care very much."

"You have Thaddeus."

Nick suggested this because he wished to discover just what the status of friendship was as it existed between those two. He did not want a hue and cry sent out after the younger anarchist after he should have escaped from the country.

"Thaddeus is only an acquaintance because we are both Poles. He thought he found a friend in me, and I have permitted him to think so."

"You did not know him in Poland, then?"

"No."

"Don't you ever get weary of this work?" was the next question that the detective asked.

"Sometimes; although, as I have told you, I love it. It is something to feel the power that these implements of death bestow upon one. But I am tired of it all. Many times I have been on the point of destroying what is here, and then taking one bomb only, go out into the middle of a field somewhere, and—you know."

"I am afraid that I am interrupting you at your work," said Nick, rising, for he began to fear that the little old man might decide then and there that he had lived long enough; and Nick had no inclination to be blown up on that particular evening.

"Yes. It is true. I am talking too much."

"I will go, then."

"Yes. But you will not forget the appointment for to-morrow?"

"No."

"I should not wish you to forget it. I have thought of something that I wish to do, when we arrive at the headquarters of the police. That is why I wish you to take me there."

"Of course. You want to see and talk with Thaddeus."

"Certainly. Certainly."

He said the words with an absent air which told the detective plainly that he was not thinking of Thaddeus when he uttered them.

And then, like a flash, it occurred to Nick what the little expert did really wish to do when he was once inside the building in Mulberry Street.

The old man, fanatic that he was, had made up his mind since the appointment was agreed upon to blow up that building; to destroy police headquarters.

Nick could read the determination as plainly now as if the man had told him; and he shuddered again to think how nearly he had come to taking him there.

Truly this was a dangerous man whose activities should in some manner be controlled; and yet, it was not safe even to touch him with a finger lest he should pull one of those strings and blow himself and all who were near to him into eternity.

Here was another problem for Nick to solve, and it was by no means an easy one. How to effect a capture of this man whose very existence was fraught with peril to everybody who came near to him, whether they happened to be friend or foe.

With a string in every pocket upon which there was only a touch needed to bring about a catastrophe, he presented a problem which corrugated Nick's brow with deep lines when at last he found himself in the street again.

He crossed over to where Patsy was keeping watch, and to him he said:

"Don't lose sight of the fellow, Patsy, but don't get too close to him; and no matter what happens, remember that on no account are you to put a hand upon him."

CHAPTER XI.

THE MADAM'S SUBSTITUTE.

Since Nick had received the address of Zenobia he had somewhat altered the plans he had originally intended to carry out in regard to her. The mere mention of the address, when it was whispered in his ear by Thaddeus suggested the move, because he saw possibilities which had not before that occurred to him.

But now that he was in possession of both addresses that he had so vainly sought, he felt that he had secured control of the case, and that it would not be necessary to permit these would-be murderers to go to Washington, as he had at first intended they should.

Zenobia's address as given to him by Thaddeus was a house in West Twenty-seventh Street—one of the small, two-story brick houses that are there, and which he had no doubt she had managed to secure already furnished for her needs.

She could not possibly have selected a better place in which to lie *perdu* while the law was trying to find her, for although Nick Carter had received no official announcement of her escape, he had no doubt that the search was being pushed with all the vigor possible.

But Nick Carter happened to know that particular house in which she had taken refuge; and also it happened that Danny, his chauffeur lived in one of the two that adjoined it. This, of course, was merely a piece of the detective's proverbial luck, but it was very good to contemplate, just the same.

As soon as he left Patsy waiting in front of the shoemaker's place, he hurried homeward where he knew that he would find Danny; or, at least, if he were not there, he would be at the garage where the automobile was kept.

But Danny was there, and presently Nick rang for him.

"Danny," he said, "I shall not want the car again to-night, but I think I shall want you."

"All right, sir. Here I am," was the reply.

"Has that house you live in, in Twenty-seventh Street, got a scuttle in the roof?" the detective asked him; and Danny stared. "Answer me, Danny."

"Yes, sir. It sure has."

"And that house as well as those on either side of it are exactly alike, aren't they?"

"They are, sir; as like as peas in a pod."

"Very well. I think I will walk home with you now, if you are ready to start."

"Sure, I'm glad to have you do it, sir. The missus will be honored."

"Has the house next door to you, toward the westward, been vacant very long, Danny?" the detective asked him, as they went out upon the street.

"I don't know as you can rightly say that it has been vacant at all, sir. The folks who live there seem to be away a great deal, and it's mostly shut up tight. But since yesterday or the day before, I think it was, there has been somebody there."

"Well, I am going to break into that house if I can, by entering it through the scuttle, after getting to the roof through the scuttle from your house. That is why I am going home with you, lad."

"Yes, sir."

As soon as they arrived—the hour was then approaching nine o'clock in the evening—Nick repaired at once to the top floor and then by the short ladder to the scuttle where he gave his attention to a particular examination of the fastenings that held it, and to their location, knowing that those in the house adjoining would be made on the same plan.

Then he crossed the roof to the adjoining house and gently tried the other scuttle to find out if it was fastened or not.

It was, and after listening carefully with one ear pressed closely against it, Nick made use of a brace and bit that he had brought with him, and in silence bored a circle of holes so that one just touched against the others on either side of it; and presently, with a screw-eye that he had previously imbedded in the wood, he delicately lifted out the circular piece of wood inside the holes and laid it on the roof beside him.

After that it was an easy matter to thrust one hand through the opening and so to find the fastenings and undo them.

The scuttle was now ready to lift at any moment he cared to do so, and so he returned to Danny's house and passed the next two hours in a very pleasant chat with Danny's young and buxom Irish wife Nora.

It was a quarter past eleven when he finally rose from his chair and announced that he must be about his business.

"Don't you want me to go with you, sir?" asked Danny.

"No. You may remain up, however, and wait for me if you like. I may wish to return by this route, although I cannot say. If you should hear me rap against the wall, follow me into the house."

"Yes, sir; I'll wait for you. I will come to you at once if you rap on the wall."

On the roof Nick raised the scuttle noiselessly, stopped a moment to listen, and then let himself slowly down inside.

When he paused in the upper hall to listen, he plainly heard the murmur of voices from below, one of which he recognized as Zenobia's, while the other was strange to him.

The two persons were seated in the back parlor of the house, and bits of their conversation reached his ears understandingly.

By it he was able to comprehend that they were awaiting together the arrival of the 'expert,' and that Zenobia was giving her friend some particulars about his character. He heard her say:

"Don't on any account get too near to him, and don't for your life touch him. He gives me the creeps every time he is near me, for really I don't know but what he will set off one of those pet bombs of his some time, just for the mere joy of hearing it explode. Oh, he is a terrible man!"

Her companion, also a woman, laughed at this.

"I declare, Zenobia, you are getting nervous," she exclaimed; but Zenobia repudiated this with spirit.

"It is getting along toward midnight now," she said presently. "My expert is likely to be a little ahead of time; he usually is. So I think you had better go up-stairs as we agreed. I don't mind his knowing that you are in the house, if he should ask the question, but it wouldn't do for you to be present at the interview."

Nick, who had been slowly descending the stairs that he might hear the better, was rather nonplussed at this, and he barely had time to regain the top of the stairs again before Zenobia's friend began to ascend them.

There were only two rooms on that floor, and Nick had no idea which one this woman would seek to enter, so he selected the front one for his own use, hoping that she might take the other and thus leave the coast clear for him. But he felt in his pocket for the bottle of chloroform he had brought with him, expecting that he would have to use it in subduing Zenobia; and just as he did so, he heard the woman's step on the hall, and the next instant she pushed open the door and entered where he was.

Instantly Nick saturated his handkerchief with the fluid, and he heard her gasp, and half-exclaim, "What smells so?" Also she passed him at the same instant.

As she did so, he seized her, throwing his left arm firmly around her body and at the same time pressing the saturated handkerchief tightly over her nostrils and mouth so that she could not breathe save by drawing in the fumes of the chloroform.

In a moment she was unconscious, but Nick administered all he dared, nevertheless, for he did not wish her to awaken too quickly. Then he picked her up and laid her gently on the bed in the alcove of the room.

As he went into the hall again the door-bell rang, and he knew that the shoemaker had arrived; and he stood at the top of the stairs looking down upon them when Zenobia admitted him. Nick hoped that the man would not slip, or fall, or run against the door-casing as he entered. Such an accident might have produced dire results.

"You have come at last, have you, you terrible man?" exclaimed Zenobia, as she conducted him through the house to the back parlor where she had been sitting with her friend.

"Yes, you beautiful young animal," was the gravely spoken reply; and he added, still with gravity: "Do you know that sometimes I am tempted to drop one of my little toys at your feet, just because I think you are too beautiful for this world?"

She laughed lightly. Evidently she knew exactly how to govern this madman; but she said:

"You are not the only one who has threatened to throw a bomb at my feet, my friend; only I think the other one meant it, and I know you do not."

The little man stopped in the middle of the floor and stared at Zenobia.

"Do you mean it?" he asked. "Did some one actually threaten to do that?"

"Yes; some one actually did."

"Who was it?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I would kill him if I knew who it was. I would drop one of my little bombs at his feet, Zenobia."

"Would you? I may remind you of that promise later, my expert."

"Who is the man? Tell me his name?"

"I may not do that; at least, not now. I will tell you this, however: He is the man who was selected as the 'instrument' at our meeting last night."

"Why did he threaten you? Was it because he was chosen?"

"No; it was because he wished to force from me a promise of marriage with him, if he returns successfully from the fulfilment of the decree."

"And you promised?"

"What else could I do? I had to do so to save my own life. If I had not promised, he told me he would throw the third bomb you have brought here to-night at my feet, and kill me."

"Who is he? Tell me his name."

"It is against the oath to do so; but I will tell you what I can do."

"What?"

"I can send you to meet him in my place to-morrow morning at ten. I have the power and the right to do that. You will then know who he is, and if he should return from Washington successful——"

"He will not live to force you into a marriage with him against your will, Zenobia," he interrupted her.

"I knew that I could depend upon you, my friend," she cooed, as if he had promised her a box at the opera instead of agreeing to do a murder for her.

"You will send me to meet him for you in the morning?" he insisted.

"Yes."

"Then I need not leave these toys with you; eh?"

"No. I would rather you would handle them, anyway."

"But you have others, that you carry for your own protection, haven't you, since that last time you were arrested?" he asked anxiously.

"Yes. I have two up-stairs. I do not need to keep them about me here in the house."

"You should never be without them, Zenobia. Now tell me about that meeting with the 'instrument.' "

"At the 'appointed place' at ten in the morning. You will go there in a closed carriage. He will be waiting, but you know the signal, and can give it to him. He will be expecting me, but he will have no choice when you give the signal. Here is money; take it. But, you will not harm him till his work is done?"

Nick heard no reply to that question, and he guessed that the expert shook his head in a negative. Then he heard the little man ask her if he might kiss her hand in bidding her good night, and in another moment he had passed out of the house again, and was gone.

And then, when Nick realized that he and Zenobia were practically alone in the house, he stepped into the room and confronted her.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FATE OF TWO ANARCHISTS.

That was rather a dramatic moment; and it might well have been a tragic one, too, but the detective had heard Zenobia tell the little man that her own "toys" were safely stowed away up-stairs, and he took the chance that she had told the truth.

When he confronted her so suddenly and unexpectedly, she started back with a little cry, but she controlled herself admirably, and actually smiled at him while she backed slowly to the mantel over the fireplace, and stood there leaning against it.

Nick had visited her in jail once, and had thought then that she was beautiful, but now, faultlessly attired as she was, she was bewitching in her loveliness; but he addressed her coldly.

"This is not our first meeting, madam," he said.

"No," she replied, still smiling. "I remember you perfectly. You are Mr. Carter."

"That is quite correct, madam."

"And you have come to take me to the prison in Washington, I suppose."

"That is also correct."

"Suppose I should refuse to go with you?"

"I am afraid that would make no difference with the result of my call."

"How did you enter the house?"

"Through the scuttle."

"How long have you been here?"

"Long enough to have chloroformed your friend whom you sent up-stairs, and also to have overheard your interview with the expert."

"It is a lucky thing for you that you did not attempt this scene while he was here."

"Oh, I am quite well aware of that, madam; as I am also aware that your own toys, as you call them, are in another room. Will you go away with me now quietly, Zenobia, or shall I be obliged to use the chloroform again, or, at least, some force?"

"What about my friend who is up-stairs?" she asked, instead of replying.

"You may write a note which she will find when she wakens, in which you will say that you were obliged to leave suddenly."

"Suppose I should refuse to leave such a note?"

"That would necessitate my taking her with us; and that is unnecessary. I observe that writing-materials are on the table, and I will suggest that time presses."

She tossed her head defiantly and then seated herself at the table to write; and as she did so Nick crossed the room to the party-wall between that house and Danny's, and rapped loudly upon it.

"Why did you do that?" she asked, suddenly raising her head and staring at him.

"It was a signal to my chauffeur," he replied.

"Indeed! Does he inhabit the space between the ceilings of these houses?"

"No; he lives in the adjoining house. I went through his house to the roof, and from there entered this house."

"How did you know I was here?"

"We need not go into that, I think; and, besides, you are delaying your note. Please make haste. Ah, Danny, you got here quickly. How long do you think it will take you to skip over to the garage and bring the car here?"

"Fifteen minutes, sir; not more."

"Well, do it as quickly as you can."

After Danny had gone there was silence for a few moments while Zenobia continued writing, and then, having finished the letter, she passed it to Nick for him to read.

"That will do very well," he told her. "If you leave the light burning and the letter open on the table, I have no doubt she will find it before daylight. I am glad to see you accept the inevitable with so much philosophy, Zenobia."

"Why should I take it otherwise? I know that I cannot escape from you, but I do think I will be able to outwit others, later on. Mr. Carter, I had no hand in the two murders with which I am charged. If I am guilty at all it is only with being as accessory after the fact, as the lawyers say."

"You will have ample opportunity to establish that in court, madam. I heard you to-night, plotting the murder of another man, however."

"Oh, well"—she laughed lightly—"the world will be the better for his taking off; and he is as good as dead already, I think."

"I have also seen your letter to Michael. That of itself, Zenobia, would be sufficient to send you to prison."

"Oh, I suppose so. But I have the feeling that I shall not remain in any prison a very long time. You will hear from me again, Mr. Carter."

"Possibly. Possibly."

She leaned forward resting her chin on her hand, and after a moment, she said:

"I suppose I ought to hate you, but I don't."

"No? That is thoughtful of you."

"Men call me a beautiful woman. Do you think so?"

"It is the soul of a woman that should be beautiful, Zenobia."

"Soul! Bah! I never was allowed to have a soul. I was suckled on crime. I have never known any other kind of life. I am not bad at heart; it is my training."

"Hark!" said Nick. "There is Danny's horn. Where are your wraps? In this closet? Very good. In the morning you may send a messenger here for a few necessaries. We will not stop for them at present. Are you quite ready? I will take your arm, if you will permit me. Need I advise you not to attempt an escape from me?"

"No."

And so they passed out of the house to the waiting automobile, entered it, and were driven rapidly away.

* * * * * * *

At fifteen minutes before ten o'clock the following morning Nick Carter took up a position close to the "appointed place" at Columbus Circle.

A hundred feet away from him another man was waiting, and after regarding him narrowly, Nick had no doubt that he was the chosen "instrument" for carrying out the decree of the anarchists, as selected two nights before at the meeting of the group.

Nick was rather sorry that the little expert had been delegated to keep the appointment with the instrument, for he knew how unwise it would be to attempt to arrest him, or even the other man while he was present.

One who was so encased with explosives as the expert had described himself, was not a safe proposition to monkey with.

But over against the curbstone in Eighth Avenue Danny was waiting with the automobile, and Nick had no doubt that he would be able to keep the two men in sight, or, at least, the carriage in which they would ride, until the time came for them to separate; and after that he believed he could accomplish the arrest of the "instrument" without much difficulty.

No knowledge of the arrest of Zenobia had been permitted to leak out, and he knew that these men were ignorant of it, for he had set a guard over the house in Twenty-seventh Street to prevent the happening of any event that would inform them.

The other man who was waiting, and whom Nick believed to be the "instrument" seemed to be very impatient.

He strode up and down the short space where he waited, and with every moment pulled out his watch and looked at it; but only to return it to his pocket and then to resume his impatient stride.

Then, just as the hands of Nick's watch pointed to ten o'clock, a closed carriage, with the curtains drawn was driven rapidly out through the park entrance and was presently pulled up sharply directly in front of the impatient instrument.

The door was thrown open and a head appeared—the head of the little expert; and Nick could see, although he could not hear, that he said something rapidly to the waiting man, who had started back at sight of him, and seemed to be cursing roundly.

It appeared to Nick that he refused to enter the carriage, and that the little man was trying to persuade him to do so, but apparently with little effect.

At last, however, he seemed to be prevailed upon, and stepped forward, entered the carriage, and closed the door behind him; and then——

The horror of it all came like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky.

There was a deafening report, and a frightful concussion that seemed to shake the earth.

The carriage seemed to fly into a million pieces on the instant, and where it had stood an instant before there was now nothing.

The driver, strange to say, although he was hurled many feet away, alighted right side up, practically unhurt, but so frightened that when he struck on his feet he kept right on running, and so disappeared. The horses, too, by some miracle, were uninjured, although badly frightened.

But the carriage was demolished, and with it the two men who were inside—and demolished seems to be the word to apply to their condition, and there was a hole in the pavement under them in which they might have been buried.

Nick looked upon the scene for a moment, then crossed over to where Danny was waiting.

"I don't think we are needed here, Danny," he said. "There are two less anarchists in the world, all right. Take me to police headquarters."

* * * * * * *

A way was found to enter the little shoemaker's shop in Fifteenth Street without blowing up the block, and its contents were destroyed. Zenobia was taken safely to Washington, and left there to await trial.

Thaddeus Marowitz sailed at three o'clock that afternoon without having heard of the fate of his several acquaintances.

THE END.

The next number (606) will be "An Anarchist Plot; or, Nick Carter on a Difficult Trail."

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THE MURDERER'S DOG.

In the winter of the year 1887 I spent a few weeks in Madrid.

I was staying at the Fonda de la Paz, the hotel principally patronized by American tourists.

The rooms allotted to me, in return for a payment of forty pesetas a day, were on a second floor, and commanded an uninterrupted view of the famous Puerta del Sol, the principal public thoroughfare of the capital.

One day, after returning from a bull-fight, at which "all Madrid," including the queen regent, had assisted, I found quite a large crowd gathered around the entrance to my hotel, and a number of people were talking at the top of their voices and gesticulating wildly. The hotel interpreter was standing calmly surveying the scene in the most approved and dignified Spanish manner; and, pushing my way through the people until I reached him, I begged him to explain to me what was the matter.

"It is nothing," he said quietly; "only that man yonder in the long cloak is a murderer, and he is being stared at by the crowd."

"A murderer!" I exclaimed. "Then how is it he is not in custody?"

"He has been. He has come out of prison to-day."

"He has been released?"

"No; he has had leave of absence to attend the bull-fight. Instead of returning to prison, as he should have done, he has taken a stroll on to the Puerta. The people have recognized him, and so now he is waiting here until the police come to take him to prison again. Some of the crowd might annoy him if he walked away."

I went up-stairs to my room, and from my balcony I saw the ending of this little incident of Spanish every-day life. In about five minutes the police arrived; and, under a strong escort, the murderer was taken away, and politely conducted back to prison.

As he stood in the center of the officers, I had a good opportunity of observing his features. I took a mental note of them, and registered them on my memory.

That evening the interpreter accompanied me to a café-chantant in a low quarter of the town, where it was dangerous for a foreigner to go alone.

In the intervals of the entertainment my interpreter told me the story of the murderer of whose rescue from the mob I had been an eye-witness that afternoon.

Don Roderigo C—— was awaiting his trial for the murder of his wife under peculiarly atrocious circumstances. The poor woman had aroused his jealousy by some thoughtless act, and, after a violent quarrel, he had confessed that his suspicions were groundless, and that he was quite satisfied with her explanation.

But on the morning after the quarrel, while she was sleeping calmly by his side, he had deliberately stabbed her to death with his navaja, a murderous, long-bladed knife which is to the Spaniard what the stiletto is to the Italian.

For this murder he was arrested, and was waiting his trial when he obtained a day's holiday from an official of the prison to go and see the bull-fight.

Now, it happens that I have in my possession a collection of photographs connected with famous criminal cases, and a whole album full of the portraits of ladies and gentlemen who have qualified themselves for admission to the Chamber of Horrors. I mentioned this fact to my guide, and told him I should very much like to add a Spanish murderer to my collection. I was assured that my desire could easily be gratified, as Don Roderigo's photo was being exposed for sale in the principal shops in Madrid. On the following day the photograph was in my possession.

A few nights afterward, returning very late to my hotel, I met an American friend, and we adjourned to my rooms, and sat talking and smoking until far into the night. When my friend left me I flung my windows open, to let out the smoke, and stepped out into the balcony.

There was plenty of life in the Puerta still, and I stood and finished my cigar and watched the cloaked Spaniards, looking like conspirators in a comic opera, as they flitted past me in the moonlight.

Suddenly my attention was attracted by a man who was dragging a large black poodle dog after him by a string, and swearing at it and kicking it.

I had noticed the same man walking up and down in front of our hotel with a dog before, and I understood that he was a dog-dealer.

The next day, when I went out, the dog-dealer was outside the hotel, and he was still accompanied by the poodle. The man came up to me, and, addressing me in Spanish, asked me to buy the dog.

One of those odd impulses for which one cannot always account seized me, and I thought I would buy the dog, if only to save such a handsome fellow from cruel treatment. I called the hotel interpreter to my aid, and the bargain was eventually struck. I paid a good deal more than the dog was worth; but I have no doubt the interpreter added a good percentage to the price for himself. He informed me that the dog was formerly the property of the murderer I had seen on the previous evening. After his arrest, it had been bought by the dealer who had now sold it to me.

"You are fond of curiosities, señor," said the interpreter. "You have one now, for you have a murderer's dog!"

"A murderer's dog!" I said to myself. "It doesn't sound pretty, but I suppose the animal hasn't acquired any of his master's bad habits."

As soon as I had paid the money, I took the dog up to my room, and coaxed him and petted him, and we soon became good friends.

In honor of his nationality, I christened the dog Don.

In the spring of the year 1889 I was walking along Fifth Avenue with Don, when my attention was attracted by his running and barking around a man whose face seemed familiar to me.

"Where have I seen that face before?" I said to myself; and then it suddenly occurred to me that the man was very like the Madrid murderer whose dog I had bought.

Before I could get near enough to take a good look at him, he was lost in the crowd.

When I went home that afternoon I took out the portrait of Don Roderigo, and looked at it carefully.

It was a most extraordinary resemblance.

"Don," I said to the poodle, who was now my constant companion, "Don, my boy, I believe that was your old master."

Don wagged his tail.

But, when I came to think it out, I felt sure that I must have been deceived by an accidental likeness. The man who murdered his wife must either have been executed long ago or be working out his sentence in a Spanish prison.

It was about a fortnight later that one evening at the opera, while glancing round the house through my opera-glasses, I uttered an exclamation of surprise.

Seated in a box by the side of a beautiful girl was the man who was so like Don's master.

Seated in the next seat to me was a friend of mine who knows "everybody" in New York.

I asked him if he knew the occupants of the box.

"Oh, yes," he said; "the old gentleman standing at the back of the box is a Mr. Tomkins, a very wealthy man, rose from nothing, made his money out of a sauce, I believe. The young lady is his only daughter—pretty girl, isn't she? The foreigner is a Spaniard—Don Pedro del Campo his name is."

"Know anything about him?"

"Not much. He gives himself out as a Spaniard of fortune, and is supposed to come from South America. He's engaged to Miss Tomkins. Father doesn't like him, but the girl is madly in love with him."

"Seems to be a little mystery about him, eh? Is he in a good set over here?"

"No. But there's no doubt he's wealthy. Old Tomkins is a businesslike man. I believe he required a banker's reference before he consented to the marriage."

I left the opera that night determined to find out something about Don Pedro del Campo.

I had paid a good deal more attention to him all the evening than I had to the opera, and I had become convinced that he was none other than the man I had seen in custody in Madrid for the murder of his wife.

My first inquiries were so far satisfactory. Don Pedro was a man of wealth. There was no doubt that his wealth came from South America. He lived in good style in New York, and his credit was excellent.

I thought I would find out if Don Roderigo's fate was known in Madrid, so I wrote to a friend there, and from him I received the following information:

Don Roderigo was found guilty, with extenuating circumstances, and condemned to several years' imprisonment.

Some six months later he saved the governor of the prison from an attack made upon him by a convict, and assisted the officers to quell a revolt. For this he was pardoned on condition he left the country. It was rumored that directly after his release he inherited a fortune from a brother who died in South America.

Don Pedro del Campo was Don Roderigo, the murderer! I was sure of it.

But how was I to prove it?

I found out the places Don Pedro was in the habit of frequenting, his hours of going out, and one day I stationed myself outside his house about eleven o'clock.

I had Don with me.

About ten minutes past eleven Don Pedro came out. I followed him a little way, then passed him, having the dog on a lead.

I thought the dog seemed excited as he passed the Spaniard. He sniffed and cocked his ears up.

Presently I loosed the dog, and he ran back and began to bark and jump up at Don Pedro.

I called the dog to me, and, raising my hat, apologized for my dog's attentions.

In fairly good English, Don Pedro assured me that no harm was done.

"This dog is a countryman of yours," I said.

"Indeed!"

Don Pedro looked at the dog more attentively.

"Yes; I bought him in Madrid two years ago. He was the dog of Don Roderigo, who murdered his wife."

Don Pedro looked at me nervously; then he looked hard at the dog, who still whined and barked, and attempted to caress his late master.

The Spaniard's face went ashy white for a moment, but he regained his composure.

"Call your dog off!" he said angrily. "I am afraid of dogs."

Then he turned around and walked rapidly away.

That afternoon I took a bold and decided step.

I called on Mr. Tomkins, and told him my story. The old gentleman was horrified, and declared he would at once demand an explanation of his future son-in-law.

"A murderer!" he exclaimed. "Great heavens! what a fate for my child!"

As I was leaving the house with Don, who had accompanied me, we met Don Pedro on the steps. He was about to call.

When he saw the dog, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and, muttering something in Spanish, walked hurriedly away from the door.

A week afterward I received a letter of thanks from Mr. Tomkins. Don Pedro had written to say that business had necessitated his immediate return to South America, and under these circumstances he resigned all claim to the hand of Miss Tomkins.

The young lady was inconsolable for a time; but when she learned that her hero was a wife-murderer she gradually recovered her spirits, and felt that she had had a lucky escape.

I still have Don, and I never look at him without thinking how astounded his master must have been when he came sniffing about his legs. When you commit a murder in Madrid, you don't expect the dog you left behind you there to come suddenly barking and frisking around you in New York.

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